

Clinton: "an old and discredited story"

Conspiracy theories played down in aftermath of theft of Ashdown papers

Parties tell of 50 office burglaries in two years

BY STEWART TENDLER AND BILL FROST

ALL three main political parties yesterday issued fresh details of more than 50 burglaries against party offices up and down the country over the past two years as calls increased for an enquiry into possible political espionage.

Many party workers refuse to subscribe to conspiracy theories but admitted increasing concern about the level of the burglaries and their computer targets. The cases are being investigated as ordinary crimes inspired by the fact many constituency offices are in buildings with little security and are often equipped with valuable computer equipment.

The earliest Liberal Democrat case was in December 1990 when the offices of the Truro constituency party were broken into although neither the police nor the office staff could work out how the thieves got in.

The burglary was discovered when the constituency organiser, tried to find a collection of 70 computer discs. The discs, containing details of members and party helpers, had been taken with about £20 in stamps but portable office equipment had been left.

Last August the offices were burgled again when the thieves broken in through a skylight. This time they took nothing although they did try to force the locked drawer where the discs had been kept.

In Brecon, the offices used by Richard Lacey, the Liberal Democrat MP for Brecon and Radnor, and his constituency party were broken into last August.

Two computers worth a total of £5,000 were taken and constituency records held on computer disc were also taken. Yesterday Mr Lacey said that at the time the burglary was thought to be the work of someone dealing in stolen computer equipment.

Details of the Truro burglary were passed to Brecon and the CID officers spoke to their opposite numbers in Cornwall to see if there was any connection. The police decided there was not.

The offices of the Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors in Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, have been broken into three times in July, October and November last year. In the first burglary a word processor was taken and the second time equipment to go with the word processor was taken. In both these burglaries the offices of voluntary groups sharing the building were also robbed. In November the burglars concentrated on the Liberal Democrats and took a key computer with membership records, ignoring other equipment.

In Bath, the Liberal Democrat office was burgled last October. A front door was broken and internal locked doors were kicked down. On January 23, staff at Paddy Ashdown's constituency office in Yeovil discovered that a computer containing confidential membership records and returns from canvassing had been used. There was no sign of forced entry.

The Liberal Democrat constituency offices for Richmond and Barnes in south London were broken into two weeks ago, on 26 January.

The Conservatives' office in Bradford was burgled in March last year as the full-time agent Val Binney and her team of voluntary workers

nored other computer equipment. Four days ago an office used by Lord Holme of Cheltenham, an adviser to Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, at the offices of the Constitutional Reform Centre in Covent Garden were burgled. A computer and papers were stolen.

Over the past three years 26 Conservative constituency offices have been burgled some of them several times. Conservative Central office said yesterday. The total of break-ins during the period is 39.

Offices in The Wrekin, Shropshire, were raided five times. Each time computer equipment was taken. Burglars also visited the party's offices in Chichester, West Sussex, three times over 18 months. Streatham Conservative Association in south London was raided three times over the same period. The most recent burglary was just over a month ago. Again computer equipment was taken.

The Conservatives' office in Bradford was burgled in March last year as the full-time agent Val Binney and her team of voluntary workers

party's regional agent said cash in the same safe and items of personal jewellery were left. He said: "The theft could be regarded as a 'routine burglary' but any theft of computer equipment and computer records from a political party could be regarded as highly suspicious."

Tory offices at Bath, Chris Patten's marginal seat, also lost computer equipment in a burglary. A regional official said that although there was inadequate evidence to support a conspiracy theory, "perhaps in the light of other recent events, there might be a need to re-examine the circumstances."

John Earl, deputy central office agent for Greater London, said: "Petty thefts from constituency offices have been going on for years and I would suspect that there are lots of burglars sitting on stolen computer discs with no idea what to do with them."

Labour has reported burglaries at constituency offices in Bow and Poplar, Bethnal Green and Stepney, Hornsey and Wood Green, all in London, the party office for the Manchester, Stretford seat and homes of full-time organisers in Islington, north London, and Wigan.

Nine Labour MPs have been burgled, including seven offices at Westminster. Peter Hain, MP for Neath, has accused the security services of supplying stolen information to the government. The Labour incidents include three thefts from Jack Cunningham, the party's campaign manager, and records taken from the office of Marjorie Mowlem, the party spokeswoman on City affairs.

John Prescott had a disc stolen from his research machine after the prime minister ordered an enquiry into a leak of the draft of the Queen's Speech to Mr Prescott.

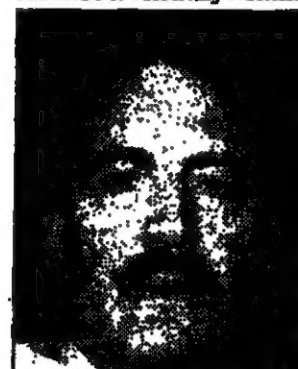
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From the gutter and Lowestoft day, page 14
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Lacey: disks and two computers stolen

The burglar got in through a window at lunchtime and took nothing.

Last weekend the party's offices for the Littleborough and Saddleworth constituency on the edge of Manchester were broken into and a £500 personal computer, a printer and membership records were taken. The burglar, who forced a door, moved aside a £100 camera on the desk next to the computer and also ig-



Lord Holme: computer and papers taken

prepared for the May local elections. The IBM computer which held the full election plans and the local membership records on its hard-disk was dismantled.

The office of the Leeds North West Conservative Association was broken into last year and the only item stolen was its computer. The discs were taken, a safe broken into and the back-up copies of the disks stolen. Eric Ward the



Mrs Ashdown: knew of affair at the time

Former lover pleads for privacy

BY BILL FROST

PADDY Ashdown's wife and his former lover faced the press on separate London doorsteps yesterday. Mrs Ashdown said that she had known of her husband's affair at the time, while Tricia Howard asked to be set free from intolerable intrusion and pressure.

Ms Howard, aged 48, stood in silence posing for pictures as a solicitor issued a statement on her behalf deploring the zeal with which the tabloid press had pursued the story. She patiently endured the shouts from photographers and ignored invitations such as "Smile a bit more" and "Come on love, give us a beam".

As journalists pushed forward, the sound of toppling photographers' ladders and cursing from the back of the pack all but drowned out the solicitor's voice. Ms Howard endured the ever-more-frantic attentions with a look of grim disdain as he read the statement a second time. "I wish to make clear that I deplore the attempts that have been made by the tabloid press in particular to



Silent pose: Tricia Howard deplored tabloids

profit from the theft of a personal and confidential document which disclosed the existence of this brief relationship and the papers who have asked me to do the same.

"I would like to say that I very much hope that, in return for making myself available to be photographed, my family and I will now be left alone to live a normal life free from intolerable pressures and intrusions."

As the statement was delivered, meat porters from Smithfield Market, close to the solicitor's offices in central London, joined the mêlée. They shouted encouragement to Ms Howard and growled at the press. As the photo session continued, the porters' hostility grew. An egg was thrown into the crowd

and a voice shouted: "That's for you scum. Leave the lady alone." The missile broke against a window, just a few feet from Ms Howard. A few minutes later, Ms Howard retreated inside. Some of the photographers set up camp on the doorstep. "I reckon we'll be on this a while," said one.

Jane Ashdown told journalists camped on her doorstep yesterday that she had known of her husband's affair. "It came as a great shock, but that was five years ago," she said. Her instinct had led her to realise that he was being unfaithful. "When you live in close proximity with a guy for a long time, it is quite easy. You do not need a sixth sense about these things, you just have to be fairly intelligent."

Girl loses mental detention claim

A council was cleared yesterday by a High Court judge of sending a girl in its care to a mental hospital without her consent because of disruptive behaviour at a children's home.

Mr Justice Kennedy said that Kirklees council, in West Yorkshire, had acted within its powers and in the best interests of the girl, aged 12, who was feared to be suicidal. "It seems to me that the local authority [social workers and officials] acted as a team, responsibly keeping each other in touch and behaving as a responsible parent would have done," he said.

Elizabeth Lawson, QC, for the girl and her mother, had said that she had been unlawfully deprived of liberty for 15 days in 1989, and held in an adult psychiatric ward on an informal basis without legal procedures being followed.

The judge said the council was entitled to have the girl assessed.

£50,000 award for train driver

The driver of a mail train who suffered from shock after making an emergency stop at 98mph when a fault caused a signal light to change was awarded £50,000 damages in the High Court yesterday.

Fred Whale, aged 61, who has been unable to work since the incident at Nuneaton station in June 1988, was afraid that the train was about to be robbed or that it might be hit from behind by another train. He had sued the British Railways Board for stress and loss of earnings. The board admitted liability.

Thief cleared of killing PC

A man who admitted stealing from cars was cleared yesterday of killing an off-duty policeman. Derek Johnston, aged 24, of Newcastle upon Tyne, was accused of being the driver of a stolen car that killed PC Duncan Clift in a car park at Hexham, Northumberland, last March.

PC Clift, aged 27, stood in front of the car after he saw its woman owner trying to stop a thief from stealing it. He died of head injuries. Mr Johnston denied being the driver. A jury at Newcastle crown court found him not guilty of murder or manslaughter.

Scargill fails

Arthur Scargill, NUM president, has been dropped as an official of his constituency Labour party after being vice-chairman for 10 years. He failed to be re-elected in competition with five other candidates in Barnsley West and Penistone, South Yorkshire.

CORRECTION

On January 31 we reported a Radio Authority ruling against Capital Radio over remarks made about homosexual people on its *Breakfast Show*. A spokesman for Capital, and consequently *The Times* report, wrongly attributed these remarks to Chris Tarrant. The presenter was in fact Russ Williams. We apologise to Mr Tarrant.

THE EUROPEAN TIMES

European edition for The Times

From Monday, *The Times* will provide a special service for readers in continental Europe. As the single market approaches, more Britons are crossing the Channel for business and leisure. From Monday, an edition of *The Times* entitled *The European Times* will be available at sales points throughout the continent.

This edition will contain the same material as the domestic editions, which themselves will carry more news from around Europe on the overseas pages and on the business and sports pages. The chief difference will be that, in place of the daily TV guide, the European edition will carry a full page on the arts and cultural events across the continent: cinema, theatre, painting, sculpture, architecture, design, fashion, music, opera and ballet. *Times* staff writers in the European capitals will comment on the cultural life of their host nations.

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Better hours will ease marital strain

BY SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PLANS aimed at reducing the strain on MPs' marriages by introducing more conventional working hours in the Commons are nearing completion.

The special Commons committee investigating working practices is to recommend a 10pm end to parliamentary business, except in emergencies. The move, part of an initiative announced by John Major when he became prime minister, will remove the pressure on family life caused by late and all-night sittings.

In practice, votes at 10pm would still delay MPs for another half-hour, but the reform would enable them to return home before midnight instead of having to remain at Westminster in case of votes in the early hours.

In the light of complaints from MPs about the difficulty of fitting in constituency work and finding time to spend with families, the committee wants also to cut the number of Friday sittings. That would take the normal parliamentary week from 2.30pm Monday to 10pm Thursday. To make up the hours, the committee will suggest a Wednesday morning sitting, probably starting at 10.30, to deal with private business.

One of the committee's main concerns is the anecdotal evidence that the late hours deter both men and women

with young families from standing for Parliament.

The MPs are understood to have ruled out sittings from 9am to 5pm because of the importance of free-mornings for ministerial, constituency and other business duties. Also, four or five morning sittings a week would do little to help MPs with small children. The committee has not yet agreed how tightly to control the scope for longer sittings in emergencies.

The prospect of a small majority, or a minority, government after the election has increased the desire for reform as heavy legislation would raise the pressure for longer sittings. Although the committee is not expected to publish its report until early March, some of its MPs are anxious to win approval from the Commons for the reforms before the new parliament.

The changes are mostly in line with the recommendations from John MacGregor, Leader of the House, and the ideas from the other parties. However, most of those on the cross-party committee disagree with Mr MacGregor's call for the abolition of ten-minute rule bills introduced by backbench MPs. The bills stand little chance of becoming law, but the committee sees them as a vehicle for worthwhile proposals that could be taken on by a government.

Marriages suffer, Major says

BY NICHOLAS WOOD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE prime minister yesterday echoed Paddy Ashdown's comments on the strains imposed on marriages by the Westminster lifestyle.

John Major said that politics was a "rough trade for marriages and always had been". Mr Major's remarks came in an interview with BBC Radio 1 broadcast last night but recorded before the Mr Ashdown's admission that he had a brief affair with his then Commons secretary five years ago.

They were in the same vein as comments made by Mr Ashdown in an interview with *Living* magazine in

which he described the Commons as a "madhouse" designed to deny MPs any social life and "smash up their marriages".

While the prime minister denied that his own marriage had been put under strain by his career, he acknowledged that his wife Norma had had some tearful moments. The pressure on her had intensified on his promotion from Treasury chief secretary to foreign secretary in 1989, a post that he held for three months before being made Chancellor.

Mr Major said that his Treasury job was "one of the

busiest jobs in the cabinet" and the one with the greatest workload. "I moved straight from that to become foreign secretary, with a lot of travelling. It was a time when a lot was happening at home with the children, and a whole series of other personal matters. It was a tough two or three months."

Mr Major said that he had been "extraordinarily lucky" that his wife had understood what his work entailed and that she had contributed remarkably. His two teenage children had also been "amazing" in their tolerance, he said.

Tape of negotiations with Maxwell played at Keays libel case

By a Staff Reporter

ROBERT Maxwell added a dash of merriment to the Sara Keays libel case yesterday when the recorded voice of the late publishing magnate was heard saying that he could be trusted as if he were the Bank of England.

The recording played to the High Court jury was of Maxwell negotiating with Miss Keays, sometime lover of Cecil Parkinson, the former Tory party chairman, over serialisation of her book *A Question of Judgement*.

Court 13, scene of libel cases involving Maxwell, echoed to laughter as he told her: "Trust me if you will... You know, my record speaks for itself... Can I say to you that you're talking to Robert Max-

well. I'm not Rupert Murdoch. I'm not a hired hand. You are as safe with me as you would be in the Bank of England."

As they struck their deal in October 1985, the week before the Tory party conference, Maxwell told her: "You're quite a tough lady."

The recording, made by Miss Keays, was produced while she was being cross-examined on the fourth day of her action against *New Woman* magazine. She is suing over an article published in October 1989 that she claims accused her of being a kiss-and-tell bimbo who wrote her book to make money and to cause maximum embarrassment to Mr Parkinson.

On the tape, the court heard Miss Keays bargain for £110,000 for the serialisation rights. It was agreed that, if serialisation did not go ahead in time for the conference, she would receive £110,000 plus £50,000 compensation and 25,000 hardback copies of the book, worth £40,000.

Miss Keays, aged 44, told the court that she was worried about industrial action and that there had to be a very strong "disincentive" against the book not seeing the light of day.

On the tape, Maxwell told her that he did not look on serialisation of her book as business, but as "a matter of major social, political and human importance". Miss Keays said that "some very big vested interests" were anxious to stop the serialisation, and Maxwell reassured her that they could not stop him, saying: "I'm not part of the establishment."

Earlier, in cross-examination by Desmond Browne, QC, for *New Woman*, Miss Keays agreed that she had told the *Daily Mirror* that it would have to pay for a photograph of herself to accompany the serialisation. "If I'm going to do anything to benefit these people, I expect to be paid for it. I have no income. My career has been destroyed."

Miss Keays, of Marksbury, near Bath, has said she wrote her book to protect her reput-

ation because of a "smear campaign" against her, and that she had not been "hell bent on revenge" against Mr Parkinson, Murdoch Magazine's (UK) and Frankie McGowan, former editor of *New Woman*, deny libel.

Miss Keays denied that she had capitalised on the notoriety of herself and Flora, her daughter by Mr Parkinson, by selling photographs of the baby to the press. She agreed that she had received £17,000 for pictures of the child at a month old that appeared in the *Sunday Mirror* and the *Observer* in January 1984.

Mr Browne, questioning Miss Keays about whether she had wanted to cause embarrassment, pointed to a reference in her book about the night in April 1982 when it was reported that Britain was about to send a small task force to the South Atlantic.

She wrote: "Cecil had stayed with me at Temple West that night and had been about to drive to Cambridge the following morning when we heard the news of an emergency meeting of the Cabinet concerning the Falkland Islands. He left in a state of some anxiety lest anyone from 10 Downing Street had been trying to get in touch with him."

Miss Keays told the court that that was included to show that it was a lie to say that at the time Mr Parkinson making a "serious criticism" of Margaret Thatcher, the then prime minister, relating to the time of the Falklands crisis. If she had not wanted to cause embarrassment, Miss Keays denied that it was to get her own back on No 10, which she claimed had "fuelled the campaign" against her.

Mr Browne asked why she had included a reference in her book to Mr Parkinson making a "serious criticism" of Margaret Thatcher, the then prime minister, relating to the time of the Falklands crisis. If she had not wanted to cause embarrassment, Miss Keays denied that it was to get her own back on No 10, which she claimed had "fuelled the campaign" against her.

If she wanted to embarrass the party, she could reveal matters, "certainly things about the Falklands war" that had not previously been made public, she said.

The hearing continues today.



Protest arrests: Peter Tatchell, a former Labour parliamentary candidate, being arrested in London yesterday during a march on Parliament to demand reform of laws on homosexuality. Several people were arrested for breaching a law banning marches within a mile of Parliament while MPs are sitting.

Rise in students to cost £150m

By John O'Leary, Higher Education Correspondent

THE reluctance of students to join the government's loan scheme has saved education ministers from an overspend on student grants and fees of almost £100 million.

Universities, polytechnics and colleges took 54,000 more full-time students last autumn, committing the government to an unexpected increase in spending on grants and fees. But the education department's annual report, published yesterday, showed that the low take-up of student loans more than compensated with a saving of £103 million.

With the number of applications for loans almost doubling this year, the saving will not be repeated, and the continuing growth in student numbers is expected to require an extra £150 million for grants and fees. By 1994, the bill may rise to £500 million. Higher education is

expanding at such a rate that the education department expects institutions to have cut their costs by more than 14 per cent in three years. Another 100,000 full-time students are expected by 1994-95. The education department expects polytechnics and colleges, which took

35,000 more full-time students in the current academic year, to have cut their costs per student by more than 20 per cent over a six-year period. Last year they took 26,000 more students with no more staff.

Universities will have made savings of 14 per cent in three years. In 1989-90, the last year for which figures have been finalised, they had the same number of students per member of staff as the polytechnics.

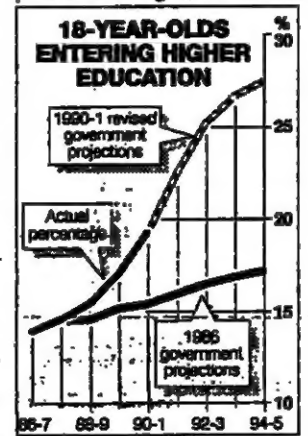
A spokeswoman for the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals said: "We have been saying for some time that we have got problems. This is why we are concerned about how universities are going to preserve the quality of their courses."

The report showed an expected rise of 10 per cent in next year's budget for higher education, as part of an £800

million increase in the department's total spending. One 18 year-old in four will be taking a higher education course, compared with one in seven in 1986-87.

A £10 million rise in the cost of the Assisted Places Scheme, enabling children from low-income families to attend independent schools, was attacked by Jack Straw, Labour's education spokesman. The increase, disclosed in the department's report, came at a time when 6,000 places remained unfilled.

Both Labour and the Liberal Democrats are committed to abolishing the scheme. Mr Straw said: "While state schools are facing very serious cuts in budgets, the government is writing blank cheques for private schools. The assisted places scheme is a failure - both remarkably unpopular and wasteful."



Thousand cancer patients given wrong radiation dose

By Jeremy Laurance, Health Services Correspondent

ABOUT a thousand cancer patients given radiotherapy treatment over the past ten years at North Staffordshire Hospital Centre received smaller doses of radiation than they should have because an x-ray system was wrongly programmed.

Cancer specialists said yesterday that the error was "extremely serious" and that the treated patients were at risk of their tumours re-growing. Some patients received doses of radiation up to 30 per cent lower than prescribed.

Yesterday, North Staffordshire Health Authority announced it was setting up an independent clinical review to discover why the error went undetected for a decade. The mistake was discovered before Christmas by the medical physicist who made the original error in 1982, but it was not made public until yesterday to allow doctors to check through the patients' hospital notes.

On Tuesday John Scoble and Murray Brunt, consultant clinical oncologists,

wrote to 447 patients who are still alive offering them an appointment. Patients' GPs have also been informed.

Only patients treated by the isocentric technique, in which the x-ray machine is rotated around the body, were affected. They amount to 6 per cent of the 17,000 patients treated over the decade. They include patients with lung, throat, bladder, pelvic and cervical cancers. Children and women with breast cancer were not affected.

The problem arose when a "correction factor", which adjusts the dose according to the distance of the radiation source from the skin, was unnecessarily programmed into the system's computer. The medical physicist responsible, who had 30 years of experience, did not realise that the correction factor was already built in, so a double correction was made.

This is the first known case of cancer patients being under-treated with radiation. In 1988, 207 patients at Exeter Hospital received excess

doses after an x-ray system was wrongly calibrated. More than £1 million compensation has been paid.

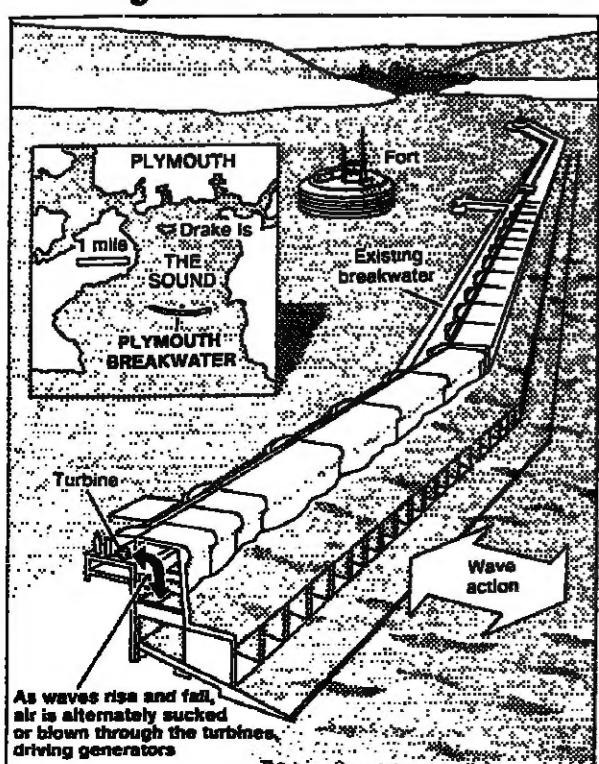
In their letter to the Stafford patients, Dr Scoble and Dr Brunt say that in spite of the reduced doses their treatment was given "satisfactorily and without any obvious clinically detectable difference in outcome from that which should be expected". Dr Brunt said yesterday: "As far as we are aware, no one has actually suffered."

Other specialists disputed that assessment. Professor Karol Sikora, clinical oncologist at Hammersmith Hospital, London, said: "If up to a third too little radiation is given the patient may not be cured and could die from the disease regrowing."

Jeffrey Tobias, consultant clinical oncologist and radiotherapist at University College Hospital, London, said: "A 30 per cent reduction in dose is extremely serious. There is risk of local recurrence and the need for salvage surgery."

Plymouth harnesses wave power

By Nick Nuttall, Technology Correspondent



ENGINEERS are planning to adapt a decaying breakwater built during the Napoleonic wars to generate electricity from Atlantic waves running through Plymouth Sound.

The scheme in co-operation with Coventry Polytechnic could become the largest of its kind in the world, providing up to 15 per cent of Plymouth with cheap and environment-friendly electricity. The project plans to harness variations of wave technology pioneered on the island of Islay by Queen's University, Belfast, and also developed by the National Engineering Laboratories at East Kilbride.

Such systems, known as oscillating water columns, use waves hitting the breakwater to alternately force and suck air through a tur-

bine as the water level rises and falls between waves. In the Plymouth scheme 30 of the wave units will be built on the front of the half-mile breakwater which lies a mile and a half from the city.

A consortium of companies including Hoare Lea, a local firm of consulting environmental engineers, is working with the polytechnic which has a strong reputation in wave energy engineering. The consortium has applied to the energy department for £100,000 towards a nine-month £200,000 study.

The consortium plans to funnel the electricity into a nearby power station. Alan Knight, of Hoare Lea, said: "For once wave power can be generated on the steps of a large city instead of at remote sites."

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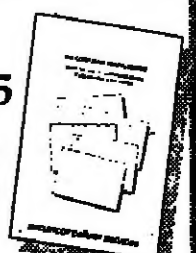
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Depressed Belfast awaits new killings

Edward Gorman reports a mood of fear and apprehension on both sides as recent violence revives the terrors of the 1970s

YOU heard them wherever you went in Belfast yesterday: on everybody's lips, words of apprehension and fear in a tense city, anticipating yet more violence.

In the Catholic Falls and the Protestant Shankill roads, there was a simple depressing resignation about what is to come. More innocent people would die. There would be no resolution and nothing would be done by Britain.

At a taxi office on the Falls Road, a few blocks from the Sinn Féin advice centre where a policeman killed three people on Monday, a young man spoke shamelessly about his desire for civil war. The killing seemed to mean nothing to him. Without a trace of irony, he described it as "a way of life". Who cared who got killed, he said. "There has to be something dramatic to end it. I mean, about 3,000 killed in two weeks so that someone will stick their head up and do something."

Just up the road, the frustration came over in a different way from a softly spoken middle-aged woman serving in a small restaurant. She gestured at the road outside where soldiers from Glasgow or Birmingham risk their lives every day.

All we see out there, she said, are funerals. Yesterday it was the doorman of the Sinn Féin centre. The day before it was a Catholic taxi driver and today it was expected to be another of the policeman's victims.

"For the past couple of years things haven't been too bad," she said. "People have been thinking it's almost normal again. But since Christ-

mas, with the bombings and murders, it's been just like the Seventies again. There's a lot of fear around. I mean, they could come in here and do it on us and we'd be completely defenceless."

She wanted to know when a British prime minister would have the courage to give Ireland back to the Irish people. "They haven't done what the people want, which is to give us our country. Who is going to be the man who will do it? Does he exist?"

From the Falls, driving across the so-called Peace Line—a wasteland of graffiti-scratched walls screaming communal hatred—to the Protestant Shankill on the other side takes just three minutes.

Many of the frustrations on the Shankill were the same. People are fed up with the intransigence of their politicians—there was hardly a good word to be heard for Ian Paisley—and desperately want the killing brought to an end.

A woman in her fifties serving in the Protestant equivalent of the little restaurant on the Falls said that Britain should pull the army out and let the gunmen slug it out. "They should put them in a field and let them blow each other to pieces," she said.

She and her friends feared that republicans would exact revenge for the beating shop murders of five Catholics on Wednesday. "You just know that, sooner or later, they are going to hit this road and it will be innocent people again," she said. "There has to be a stop to it."

Major calls meeting, page 1

Lawyers to test poll tax loophole

BY DOUGLAS BROOM
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CORRESPONDENT

THE first attempt to free a poll tax protester from prison using a loophole in the law on the use of computer evidence in court will be made next week.

Lawyers acting for Michael O'Connell, a man jailed last month by magistrates at Ealing, west London, for two months for refusing to pay the tax, will argue that computer records should not have been accepted as evidence that he had not paid. The application to the High Court for bail pending a judicial review of his case will take place less than six weeks before the government is due to close the loophole.

Figures published yesterday by the Labour-controlled Association of Metropolitan Authorities show that one in four people in London and other big cities has been summonsed for non-payment. Arguments over the admissibility of computer evidence have halted more than 20,000 poll tax cases in England. The government has said it will close the loophole by an amendment to the bill to introduce the council tax.

Nutrition centre sifts food facts

BY KERRY GILL

THE definitive guide to healthy eating, synthesised from the welter of advice and contradictory evidence that daily bombards the public, could soon be produced by the first nutrition centre of its kind in Europe.

Scotland's 15 health boards have funded the post-graduate nutrition and dietetic centre at Aberdeen's Rowett research institute, aimed at helping health professionals to sift through the confusion of dietary opinion and make sure that the public gets the correct information. Aileen Robertson, director of the centre, said that people had become confused about what they should eat because of often contradictory advice. She said the amount of government literature and recommendations faced by people in the health service added to the problem.

A course at the centre will cover topics including coronary heart disease, obesity, diabetes, nutrition and healthy eating. A training road-show, piloted in Grampian region, is to be extended throughout the UK and Europe and possibly to America.

Law firms report rise in would-be recruits

BY FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

STUDENTS aspiring to follow in the footsteps of leading barristers flocked to the stand hosted by the Bar at the opening yesterday of the two-day Law Fair in London. The Bar was one of the main attractions at the recruitment event, attended by some 50 law firms and other legal employers such as the Crown Prosecution Service and magistrates courts service.

The recession is causing funding problems for students. Lee Winetroube, of the Bar Council, said: "We are very, very busy—much more so than before. Students seem very keen to come to the Bar but they are worried about funding during their course. The dearth of the local authority discretionary grant is having an impact."

Clyde and Co, the City law firm, reported being

much busier than last year and said students were anxious about securing a job. Lisa Wilson said: "They seem very worried about securing a vacation place, such is the competition."

The fair, organised by London University careers' advisory service and sponsored by The Times, the Law Society, the Bar and the Institute of Legal Executives, is open today from 10am to 4pm at the Business Design Centre, Upper Street, Islington, north London.

Today's seminars include women in the law, becoming a barrister, a career as a legal executive, legal alternatives and a talk on law and the press by Carol Leonard, a Times feature writer and editor of its City diary.

Law Report, L&T section, page 9

Reynolds waltzes in as the Boss bows out

BY JAMIE DETTMER

THE era of the Boss in Irish politics passed away yesterday as Charles Haughey, one of the most tenacious and controversial politicians in the Irish republic's history, resigned and was replaced as leader of the main governing Fianna Fáil party by Albert Reynolds.

Mr Reynolds, sacked as finance minister nearly three months ago after spearheading an attempt to oust Mr Haughey, gained the support of 61 deputies in the ballot. He needed 39 to win.

Mary O'Rourke, the health minister, received ten votes, and six deputies supported Michael Woods, the agriculture minister. Mr Reynolds will become the Republic's ninth prime minister, after being formally nominated in Dáil (parliament) as the country's new leader next week.

In a ballot of Fianna Fáil's 77 deputies yesterday Mr Reynolds, a dance hall manager turned pet food millionaire and one of Mr Haughey's closest colleagues until he turned critic last autumn, easily won the three-horse race.

The ballot was held hours after Mr Haughey, known in

Ireland as the Boss, formally resigned as party leader. Mr Haughey announced his intention to step down last week after allegations resurfaced about his involvement in a ten-year-old telephone tapping scandal.

Mr Reynolds will be in limbo until Mr Haughey hands in his resignation as prime minister to President Robinson on Monday night. Mr Reynolds's victory had been a foregone conclusion since last Sunday when Bertie Ahern, his closest rival for the job, announced he would not run.

Yesterday, Dubliners made jokes, if nervous, predictions that Mr Haughey would at the last minute change his mind about quitting and put himself forward as a candidate. In 12 years as Fianna Fáil leader he survived five serious attempts to oust him.

For many in Fianna Fáil, Mr Haughey's departure is a numbing experience. He has towered over Irish politics since winning the party leadership in 1979.

Mr Haughey's successor is not as forceful or colourful a character. Since his sacking last November, Mr Reynolds



Bumpy road ahead: Albert Reynolds waves to supporters after his victory

has been on the so-called "chicken and chips circuit", glad-handing his way through local parties in an effort to drum up support among the Fianna Fáil faithful. His efforts to draw Mr Haughey's leadership to an end were initially dismissed by the Boss's supporters as

mere country and western singing, a disparaging reference to Mr Reynolds's past running of dance halls.

First elected to the Dáil in 1977, Mr Reynolds has had a vast amount of experience in government. As well as serving as finance minister he has held the portfolios of

industry, post and telegraphs and transport.

He is likely to sack up to six of the current cabinet, possibly including Gerry Collins, the current foreign minister.

He clearly wants to clean up Fianna Fáil and distance the party from the accusations of political malpractice

and commercial corruption which have dogged it under Mr Haughey.

Speaking at a press conference after his election, Mr Reynolds said: "I am deeply sad that the day the votes were cast, which should be one of exhilaration and hope, is, instead, a day when I, as an Irishman, must feel diminished by the killings in the north of Ireland. So often have we condemned these murderous acts that we have impoverished the vocabulary of outrage. But we must prove that we have not bankrupted our determination to find a solution to this problem."

Asked whether he would support the reintroduction of internment in Northern Ireland, he said: "We are all aware that this instrument of policy was tried way back in the 1970s. The British government would have to take into account its failings then."

He said that he looked forward to working with John Major to try to end the conflict in Ulster. The cruelty of the continuing conflict in the north came from "a dwarfed and twisted patriotism which sees inflicted death as instruments of change".

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Home rescue schemes offer scant hope

THE mortgage rescue schemes unveiled by the government just before Christmas may make only a small dent in the 80,000 borrowers facing repossession, a study organised by *The Times* has shown.

Initial estimates that 20,000 borrowers could benefit are unlikely to be met. The figure could be as low as 5,000 by the end of the year unless building societies are prepared to loan money at interest rates lower than 6 per cent.

Research devised by *The Times* in conjunction with Nick Raynsford from the housing consultant Raynsford & Morris, and compiled with the help of the Yorkshire Metropolitan Housing Association, a pioneer of mortgage rescue schemes, shows that only a quarter of the homeowners at which the scheme is aimed would be able to afford the high rents required.

Under the scheme, building societies will offer reduced-rate loans to housing associations to buy properties from borrowers in arrears. It is designed for people who have tried to meet payments in spite of having faced hardship through loss of income. The Yorkshire association analysed 40 couples in difficult

The much-hyped mortgage rescue schemes are unlikely to stop many people losing their homes, reports Rachel Kelly

ties in different parts of the country and found only ten who would qualify for rescue.

The research examined couples for who mortgage rescue was the only chance of staying in their homes. It was based on building societies agreeing loans to housing associations at interest rates of both six and eight per cent. The current base mortgage rate is 10.95 per cent.

Of the 40 case histories examined, only 14 still had equity in their house. They were the most eligible for rescue because they could sell to a housing association and become shared owners.

The Yorkshire association found that even four of those 14 would be unlikely to receive an offer of help because they would still find the rents required (£82.90 to £139.30 a week) unaffordable.

"They would face paying such a substantial proportion of their income that the

scheme would not be feasible," David Ratcliffe, development director, said.

For the 26 couples with no equity "it's bad news", Mr Ratcliffe added. Even a couple living in the cheapest housing area looked at in the research, the east Midlands, would find the rents required barely affordable.

"None of the couples without equity could be helped without some form of extra subsidy," he said. "Some would face paying 44 per cent of their income in rent."

Most couples qualifying for rescue will face such high rents that they will not qualify for housing benefits, because a lot of the rents will be above the limits set by local authorities. The only building society to have produced details of its mortgage-to-rent rescue scheme is the Nationwide which surprised the industry by disclosing that some of its loans to housing associations would have interest rates ranging from 3.5 per cent to 8 per cent. The Nationwide scheme hopes to save 100 families from repossession.

Mr Raynsford said: "Despite all the hype prior to Christmas, only one scheme and a pilot one involving one hundred homes, is all that has emerged. It's extraordinary

MORTGAGE RESCUE
Examples show how rescue is difficult for borrowers with little or no equity in their homes. The couple in the North-West benefit because their mortgage is only 60 per cent of house value.

	BAD NEWS	GOOD NEWS
Income per yr	£11,722	13,244
House value	£53,000	76,000
Mortgage plus arrears	100% £25,000	80 10,000
Repayments	£115 a wk	155 82
Interest on loan	6%	6% 8%
Rent after rescue	90.29 a wk	82.00 38.81
Status of home owner	Tenant	Shared owner Shared owner
Outcome	Rent would be 40% of income, no maintenance costs and still unaffordable	Rent would be 33% of income plus maintenance cost, and so unaffordable Rent would be 15% of income plus maintenance, and therefore affordable
Location	Yorkshire & Humberside	South-East North-West

nary that no one else has come out with a scheme. The Nationwide scheme works by deciding on affordable rents and then setting very low interest rates to match. That's how they've squared the circle. I'm not sure they could justify the scheme with those interest rates for any significant number of cases."

There are grave doubts whether all other societies involved in rescue plans will feel able to offer rates as low as 3.5 per cent. Don Wood, chief executive of the London and Quadrant Housing Trust, one of the three associations to have negotiated a deal with Nationwide, said: "Your research shows that with interest rates of 6 and 8

per cent many rents would become unaffordable. The figures from *The Times* justify the stand we were taking on affordability in our negotiations with building societies. We calculated that we needed lower rates of interest," Mr Wood said.

Asked whether other building societies would be able to match the low interest rates offered by the Nationwide, Mr Wood said: "I simply couldn't tell you. But I am more hopeful now than I was. I hope the Nationwide deal will be a benchmark."

The association said: "The Nationwide's deal was very generous but other societies may not be so generous."

David Gilchrist, general manager of the country's largest building society, the Halifax, said: "Six to 8 per cent looks like being the top end of the range of negotiations. Housing associations are pressing for something lower than that."

The Woolwich building society has yet to announce the rates it will be charging housing associations, but a spokesman said they would be about 7 per cent.

Of the 80,000 borrowers facing repossession, 60,000 do not qualify to be considered for rescue schemes.

Leading article, page 15

Self-help initiatives need aid, prince says

By John Young

THE Prince of Wales yesterday called for more support for local community initiatives from central and local government and from the private sector.

In a message to mark the launch of the seventh annual Community Enterprise Scheme organised by *The Times*, the Royal Institute of British Architects and Business in the Community, the prince, who is patron of the scheme, welcomed the increasingly significant role that community-based initiatives were being asked to play in regeneration, but said that there had to be ways of increasing the level of support and training.

The prince's message was read by Lord Scarman, chairman of the scheme, who said



Four are jailed as longest trial ends

Britain's longest trial came to an end after 17 months yesterday with the jailing of four men convicted of fraud and deception.

The trial at Nottingham crown court, followed a two-year police investigation into the collapse in 1985 of the Britannia Theme Park, near Ilkeston, Derbyshire, which owed more than £9 million. Peter Kellard, aged 57, of Bournemouth, who launched the project through a development group, was jailed for four years after being convicted of 19 charges.

Kellard's close colleague, Edward Dwyer, aged 54, was jailed for two and a half years. Kenneth Page, former director, and John Wright, former chairman, each received six-month sentences.

There were 375 witnesses and the case cost £3 million. The jury used computers to keep track of the evidence.

Woman priest

The Rev Patricia Pinkerton, who ran a Californian Episcopal church for five years, has become minister in charge of two parishes in the Forest of Dean. She will be assisted by a clergyman.

Crew rescued

Three Weymouth fishermen summoned help with a mobile phone after the radio of their stricken vessel failed. They were winched to safety by a navy helicopter before the boat sank two miles off Abbotsbury, Dorset.

Crash award

Colin Middleton, a draughtsman aged 39 who lost his right arm after his motor cycle was in a crash with a car, was awarded £149,998 damages against the driver at the Court of Session, Edinburgh.

Forged coins

Police seized moulds, ingots and 3,000 forged £1 coins in a raid on Castle Mouldings, a factory in Medway, Kent. Two men have been arrested.

Brick by brick

A Victorian chapel threatened with demolition is to be dismantled and moved 60 miles from Salisbury, Wiltshire to Pangbourne College boys' school, Berkshire.

that its aim was to help people to help themselves. Far from being confined to the inner cities, it also recognised that much needed to be done in suburbs and villages.

John Thompson, of Hunt Thompson Associates, said that community architecture would be firmly on the agenda of the new Institute of Architecture to be set up under the prince's patronage. Courses would include community experience.

This year, for the first time, the awards scheme has attracted Scottish support in the shape of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland and Scottish Business in the Community. The other sponsors are the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the National Children's Play and Recreation Unit, the Housing Associations Charitable Trust, Kingfisher, United Biscuits (UK), the Post Office, Marks & Spencer and Kwik-Fit Holdings.

Entry forms from The Administrator, Community Enterprise Scheme, 66 Portland Place, London W1N 4AD. Closing date Monday, March 30.

Mills brings zeal to battered role

By Frances Gibb
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

BARBARA Mills, QC, the first woman Director of Public Prosecutions, takes her post at critical time for the criminal justice system. She will have an important role in restoring public confidence, battered by miscarriages of justice.

Mrs Mills is likely to do the job with zeal. In just under 18 months as director of the Serious Fraud Office, she has gone about her work with crusading enthusiasm and efficiency, doing much to put the office on the map.

Mrs Mills, aged 51 and a mother of four, has had a higher profile than her predecessor at the fraud office, John Wood. In raising the credit stakes of the office, she has drawn criticism of its methods, and of what some see as over-zealous prosecuting.

Many City lawyers have not forgiven her the prosecution of Alan Keat, of the City firm Travers Smith Braithwaite, in the County NatWest trial. The judge threw the case out. They recall Mrs Mills's comment at a Law Society conference that a professional would not find himself in the dock unless there were a prima facie case against him.

Verdicts are expected soon in the Barlow Clowes and County NatWest cases, investigations crucial to any assessment of the office, set up three years ago. There

WOMAN IN THE NEWS

have been criticisms of the length of the Barlow Clowes trial and the number of charges on the original indictment. Mrs Mills has exercised more control over the format of prosecutions, but some lawyers say she has not gone far enough.

The fraud office has also been criticised for use of its power to compel people to answer questions under the Criminal Justice Act 1987.

Mrs Mills's motivation has not been prosecution for its own sake. It has been concern for victims who have lost money, which she cites as justification for what have been called the fraud office's "draconian" investigative powers. After taking over the fraud office, Mrs Mills found herself heading high-profile cases such as Guinness. The fraud office has also been investigating the Maxwell affair.

Educated at St Helen's School, Northwood, London, and Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, where she read law, Mrs Mills made her Bar career largely as a prosecutor. She was seen as "good and solid", rather than brilliant. She was junior Treasury counsel at the Central Criminal Court from 1981 to 1986. She was also second prosecuting counsel in the Guinness trial, and defended Winston Silcott.

Mrs Mills has to restore confidence in the Crown Prosecution Service after the resignation of Sir Allan Green, QC, after kerf-crawling allegations. Service lawyers will be delighted, not least because Mrs Mills will continue their fight for rights of audience in the crown court.

Mrs Mills has said that she believes more use can be made of pre-trial reviews to identify issues and of multi-professional investigations by teams of lawyers, accountants and police.



Mills: concern for the victims of fraud

Mills chosen, Page 1
Leading article, page 15



NO PRIZES FOR GUESSING BRITAIN'S BEST SELLING CAR.

If you still haven't twigged, here are a few more clues.

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Doctors call for fuller testing

Africa link detected among Aids mothers

BY THOMSON PRENTICE, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

THREE out of four pregnant women found by a London hospital to be infected with the Aids virus were of African origin. The rapid spread of the virus in Asia also makes it likely that a growing number of cases will occur among the Asian community here, according to doctors.

The evidence, reported in *The Lancet* today, gives insights into the heterosexual spread of HIV and suggests that many cases are imported unwittingly into Britain. The researchers call for all pregnant women in areas of London and other cities with high rates of infection to be encouraged to take an HIV blood test on a named basis, rather than anonymously as now, regardless of their ethnic origins.

Junga Banavala, professor of virology at St Thomas's Hospital, southeast London, who led the study, said yesterday: "Such a programme would help in prevention and surveillance of the epidemic.

We are extremely anxious to avoid what used to be seen as a gay plague being regarded as a black plague.

"The Aids virus knows no racial barriers. It is not a question of the colour of your skin, but where you have been, and what you have done there. It would be invidious to target HIV testing at specific ethnic categories. That would fail to identify any spread of infection beyond such groups, and selective screening was known to be inefficient, he said.

The report is a sequel to a finding by the same researchers of a ninefold increase in HIV infection among women attending the hospital's antenatal clinics between 1988 and 1990. A new analysis of their blood samples shows that ten out of 13 HIV-positive women — 77 per cent — were of African origin. Nine of the ten also had malarial antibodies, suggesting that they had recently been in a tropical country. In a group

of women whose ethnic origins were unknown, the five who were HIV-positive also had malarial antibodies.

Professor Banavala said that there should be further studies in inner London to identify risk categories and to see if HIV spreads beyond them, so that prevention could be targeted accurately.

"With the increasing spread of HIV in many parts of Africa and Asia, it is obvious that people moving between them and Britain are at increased risk of becoming infected and importing that infection into the UK.

"We need much more accurately targeted methods of monitoring the spread here. If pregnant women agree to be tested on an identifiable basis, we can offer those who are infected counselling, support, and care for their babies if they decide to continue with the pregnancy."

Diary, page 14
Health, L&T section, page 6



On parade: soldiers of the 1st British Tank Regiment showing off their babies at Fallingb., Germany. Homecoming celebrations after the Gulf war resulted in a baby boom with 137 births among wives of troops based in Germany

Transplant drug controls asthma

A DRUG used to prevent organ rejection in transplant patients has been found to transform the lives of chronic asthma sufferers (Thomson Prentice writes).

The drug, cyclosporin, is a standard treatment after heart and other transplants because it suppresses part of the immune system. Doctors report in *The Lancet* today that the drug also produces a marked improvement among chronic, severe asthmatics, including some who have endured asthma attacks for more than 25 years.

The finding could open the way to the development of a new range of drugs which, like cyclosporin, suppress the activity of T-cells that are important in the body's natural defences. These cells have been found to be activated in chronic asthma.

The research suggests that new drugs could benefit many of the 200,000 asthmatics who depend on high doses of steroids to control their condition. Cyclosporin improved lung function and reduced the number of severe attacks in a group of patients at the Royal Brompton Nat-

ional Heart and Lung Hospitals in London.

Andrew Alexander, a clinical research fellow, and colleagues at the hospital say in the journal that improvements occurred throughout the 12-week study period and might have continued if the treatment had been extended. One patient, a woman aged 47, could now run for a bus and go dancing, which she has been unable to do for many years.

Barry Kay, head of the hospital's allergy and clinical immunology department, and one of the co-authors of the study, said yesterday: "High doses of steroids have serious side effects, such as diabetes, and do not always control adequately severe, intractable forms of asthma."

He said that cyclosporin could also cause dangerous side effects, such as liver damage. The long-term safety and efficacy for asthmatics still had to be determined. "The real importance of our discovery is that it opens the way for a new class of anti-asthma drugs that are more selective and less toxic in suppressing the activity of T-cells."

Jail boasts the best porridge

BY KERRY GILL

ASK an old lag to name the man over whom he would most like to tip a bowl of porridge and the answer is the prison cook.

However, Bill White, head of catering at Friarton prison, near Perth, is unlikely to be smothered in "halestone porridge". Although he has only £6.20 a week to spend on each prisoner, yesterday inmates and prison inspectors declared his fare the best in Scotland's penal service. It is even served on china instead of tin trays.

A report by the Scottish prisons inspectorate says that Friarton "is the one where the inmates have displayed the most appreciation of the regime ... Indeed, more than one prisoner opined that the prison was almost too good for them."

Alan Bishop, the chief prisons inspector, said: "We were told of the very high standard of catering, many prisoners suggesting that it was the best food in the whole service. Our own observations did not lead us to regard the comments as exaggerated."

Jim Barker, governor of the jail, said: "Because we are a small prison, the food can be freshly cooked."

Porridge need not be the breakfast staple of Friarton's 70 inmates. Yesterday, they could begin with boiled egg, toast, bread and tea. Special diets and preferences are catered for, and inmates going out in working parties may tell Mr White their favourite fillings for sandwiches.

Tomorrow 15 tons of porridge oats will be flown to St. Peter's and the Salvation Army and Fife Rotary clubs to help to feed its people.



Roddick: ordered to remove factory sign

Body shop chief loses sign fight

Anita Roddick, managing director of the Body Shop store chain, has been ordered to remove a billboard put up without planning permission outside the firm's factory in Littlehampton, West Sussex.

The board displays messages reflecting Mrs Roddick's philosophy. Residents say it is an eyesore that distracts drivers. Her appeal to the environment department against Arun district council's planning refusal has failed. The council said: "Unless she takes it down soon she will face prosecution."

M-way closed

A nine-mile stretch of the M50 was closed after cracks were found in a bridge support on the Severn near Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire. Police said that rush hour traffic jams in the area were expected for at least a week.

Rape hoaxer

Wilma Wetherow, aged 22, of no fixed address, was jailed for three months by Bow Street magistrates' court, London, for hoax phone calls in which she told police she was being raped.

Body found

Police divers recovered a body thought to be that of Kenneth Hales, aged 45, missing after the capsizing of a lifeboat in which another man died at Hull on Wednesday.

High in polyunsaturates. Low in saturates. Virtually no cholesterol. (Just in case you thought it was butter.)

Let's make one thing clear. "I Can't Believe It's Not Butter!" is not butter.

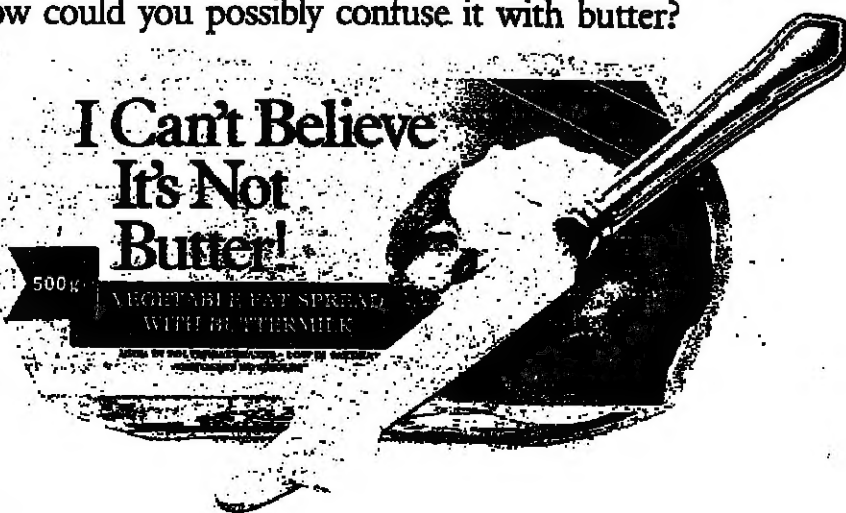
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Labour condemns 'deceit' over slump

BY PETER MULLIGAN AND JOHN WINDER

LABOUR last night accused parts of the press of deceit and hypocrisy for proclaiming the Tory message of economic recovery to their readers while reserving the real story for shareholders and directors.

Gordon Brown, the shadow trade and industry spokesman, said ministers were relying on a huge public relations offensive from some tabloids and from party advertising campaigns to conceal their economic record.

During a Labour-inspired debate on the recession, he scorned Conservative sightings of an upturn and spoke of the "recovery by phrase-makers" dreamed up over a working breakfast which "even the messengers do not believe".

Mr Brown provoked loud laughter among his backbenchers by quoting the words of *The Sun*: "It looks good. Britain's on the way. We are OK in the UK. If that's depression, let's have more of it."

He then quoted from the report last September to the shareholders of News International, the paper's owners: "Economic conditions as they affect the media are not expected to improve during the next year."

Mr Brown cited Associated Newspapers, owners of the *Daily Mail*: "Such limited signs of recovery in the UK

economy as are visible remain patchy and do not give us any grounds for optimism."

He reported the chief executive of Saatchi and Saatchi, the firm which is handling the election advertising campaign for Conservative Central Office, as saying: "I do not expect trading to be any easier this year. The length and severity of the current recession are unresolved."

The entire Tory propaganda machine made a sharp distinction between the message it put to voters and the one that went to directors and shareholders, Mr Brown said. "One truth for the public who they are prepared to deceive and another truth for directors and shareholders and the City audience on whom they depend. The public are being treated with contempt."

Mr Brown rejected John Major's assertion that Britain was caught up in a world recession. "There is no world recession. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that the prime minister is condemned by his own words as economically illiterate," he said.

He ridiculed ministerial forecasts of recovery, declared they could not be trusted and rejected accusations that he was talking Britain down.

Peter Lilley, the trade and industry secretary, said that

the preconditions of sustained recovery were low inflation, reduced interest rates and renewed confidence, but Labour policy was tailor-made to undermine all three.

Labour policies would send inflation soaring: Labour would be obliged to put up interest rates, and commentators differed only on the extent to which they would have to raise them. All nine important research houses which had analysed the impact of a Labour government, forecast higher interest rates.

Every Labour government had had to face a choice of whether to maintain the present parity of the pound or to devalue. In the past every Labour government had first put up interest rates, then "bottled out" and devalued, Mr Lilley said.

The Labour proposal for tax allowances for investment in new technology and "genuine innovation" meant Inland Revenue having to vet every investment in plant and machinery to decide whether each piece of equipment was sufficiently sophisticated. "A more guaranteed way to delay every investment is hard to imagine but that is their policy."

Labour nationalisation plans would have an adverse effect in areas of the economy which were at present buoyant. Their policies would prolong and deepen recession.

Take two aspirin and go to the lobby

BY SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE spectre of ambulances decanting ailing MPs into a hung Parliament has spurred a parliamentary enquiry to consider a system of proxy voting.

As part of their reforms of Commons working practices, MPs on the select committee have been investigating a scheme to record MPs' votes while absent in limited circumstances. They are expected to demand a separate enquiry by the procedure committee into the implications.

The parties' business managers, including John MacGregor, the leader of the House, favour informal "usual channels" to deal with sick MPs.

In recent years the large majority Conservative governments have had little need to drag MPs from their sickbeds. Many MPs are also "paired" for routine votes to exempt them from taking part in every division.

The committee now has one eye on the prospect of a hung Parliament or narrow majority, as happened at times during the 1960s and 1970s. Its report will be published early next month and it will press for a decision by the Commons before the election.

When every vote is regarded as crucial and the pairing system breaks down, the whips can rarely afford to show any sympathy for those in hospital or the recently bereaved, as

the committee chairman Michael Jopling found when an Opposition whip during the Wilson years.

After the breakdown of the pairing system in the late 1970s, many divisions hung on the attendance of all 650 MPs, however ill. Sir Alfred Broughton, the then Labour MP for Basset and Morley, was one of those brought in by ambulance to support the Callaghan government during its final weeks. The Labour leadership refused to wheel in Sir Alfred on March 30, 1979, as a result it lost the confidence vote by one. Sir Alfred died four days later.

The problem for the Commons committee has been to limit the scheme to genuine cases. Two disputed areas are the absence of MPs through family bereavement and women MPs when heavily pregnant or within days of giving birth.

The former prime minister Edward Heath told the committee how much he disliked press-gangging half-dead MPs into the division lobbies when he was chief whip in the 1950s. However, he opposed a proxy voting system because, he argued, absent MPs would not have listened to the arguments in the chamber. As Mr Heath will be 76 and in his 42nd parliamentary year after the election, MPs on the committee will no doubt have his welfare in mind when considering a scheme.



House doctor: John MacGregor favours "usual channels" to deal with sick MPs

AROUND THE LOBBY

Hunt bill loses support

John Major will not be voting for the private member's bill to ban hunting with dogs when it comes before the Commons next Friday.

Tony Banks, Labour MP for Newham North West, thanked the prime minister for allowing ministers a free vote on a bill that would protect deer, hares and foxes. Mr Major said the bill went a good deal wider than Mr Banks had suggested and that he would not be supporting it.

Beefing up the army

Ministers are looking at ways of providing British beef for the armed forces rather than meat imported from South America. John Gummer, the agriculture minister, said at question time. David Clark, his shadow, had asked him how the defence ministry could import thousands of tonnes when almost one million tonnes were already in intervention in Europe.

Moscow trip

Sir Geoffrey Howe, the former foreign secretary, is to lead an Inter-Parliamentary Union delegation to Moscow and Kiev next week. The group, which includes Ann Clwyd, the shadow overseas aid minister, hopes to meet political leaders and members of the public.

Roads pledge

The transport department will announce plans later this month to improve maintenance on motorways and to speed up the backlog of essential repairs. Christopher Chope, the roads and traffic minister, said in a written reply.

Land grants

The government's drastic land grant for England is to be increased by £18 million to £106 million in the next financial year. Sir George Young, the planning minister, said in a written reply. The money, most of which goes to local authorities, is sufficient to fund the reclamation of about 3,700 acres.

Parliament today

Commons (9.30): Private member's Bill: Timeshare Bill, second reading.

Week ahead

The main business in the House of Commons next week is expected to be Monday: Offshore Safety Bill, second reading; Tuesday: Further and Higher Education Bill, second reading and timetable motion; Wednesday: Proceedings on Consolidated Fund (No 2) Bill, Museums and Galleries Bill, second reading; Thursday: Army Bill, second reading; Friday: Private member's bill: Wild Mammals (Protection) Bill, second reading. The main business in the Lords is expected to be Monday: Asylum Bill, second reading; Tuesday: Education (Schools) Bill, second reading; Wednesday: Debate on weapons of mass destruction; Thursday: Coal Industry Bill, committee. Debate on human rights in Northern Ireland.

Counties may get new seats

BY ROBERT MORGAN

THE Boundary Commission has recommended the creation of three more parliamentary constituencies in Hampshire and Berkshire. If the recommendations are endorsed by Parliament, the Tories would almost certainly gain three extra MPs from these true blue shires.

No change will be made before the forthcoming election and they might not be in place for the following one. The commission is required by statute to review boundaries as populations shift. It tries to arrange boundaries so that there are 60,000-70,000 voters in each seat. The Parliamentary Constituencies Act, 1986 lays down that, as far as possible, county and London borough boundaries are to be followed and electorates are to be as near equal as possible.

Berkshire has seven constituencies and its present electorates indicated it should have 7.92 seats. The commission suggests an eighth seat, Bracknell, Hampshire, the commission says, should have two new seats, bringing its total to 17. Unless additional seats are created the average electorate in each of its existing seats would be 79,378. With 17 seats the average will be 70,039. The changes will divide the seat of New Forest into East and West, and a new seat of Meon Valley will be created.

Although the Isle of Wight, on an electorate basis, should have more than one but fewer than two MPs, the commission recommends no change. The commission is reviewing all seats in England and has to submit its plans for the whole country between 1993 and 1998. The last wholesale changes were made between the 1979 and 1983 elections, amid controversy over the change of name for many familiar seats.

Olympic protest

BY JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A TORY backbencher has complained to Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee, about money being spent on advertising the European Commission at international sporting events.

Tony Favell, MP for Stockport, wrote to Señor Samaranch yesterday, saying £8 million had been committed as a grant for public relations projects at the Olympics. "Could you please let me have your assurance that the European Commission will not be permitted to use the Olympics as a political vehicle?"

The Olympic charter says: "No kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in the Olympic areas."

The IOC rejected a request by Jacques Delors, the commission president, that he open the Winter Games to



Favell: questioning EC advertising in sport

morning, and his suggestion that the 12 EC nations march together, wearing the EC symbol. The committee did accept a reported £10 million fee to allow the commission some involvement — as yet unspecified — in the opening ceremony.

David Miller, page 32

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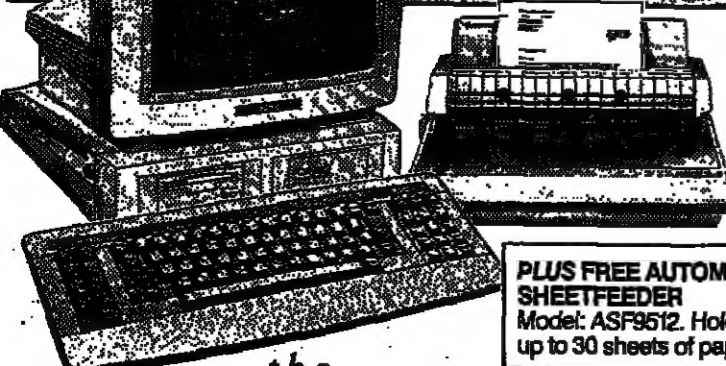
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Security council retains sanctions

Saddam challenges terms of ceasefire

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein of Iraq, apparently gambling that he can outlast John Major and President Bush, has launched a challenge to the terms of the Gulf war ceasefire.

Baghdad has rejected outright a United Nations plan for the long-term monitoring of its arms industry, and has pulled out of talks with the UN on resuming oil sales to pay for humanitarian supplies. The Iraqi position amounts to a clear violation of mandatory UN resolutions, and once again puts the country on a collision course with the security council.

In their bimonthly review of the UN embargo, the council yesterday decided not to relax the comprehensive sanctions against Iraq. It issued a statement saying it was "disturbed by the lack of Iraqi co-operation", particularly in the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, talks on a limited oil sale and the repatriation of Kuwaiti detainees and property.

Diplomats said further action was possible against Iraq, although they were uncertain just how to proceed. "Stand by for further news," said Thomas Pickering, the American ambassador, after reading the security council statement to the press.

A senior Western diplomat said: "We are gradually moving towards some difficult



Al-Anbari will not be pursuing oil sale talks

dealing with Saddam Hussein. It is not a day-to-day, week-to-week issue. It is an issue of keeping the security council committed to compliance with its resolutions."

The head of the UN special commission charged with disarming Iraq is due to report today that Iraq has refused to provide a detailed report on its defence industries, as required by the security council.

Senior Iraqi officials told the UN delegation sent to Baghdad to discuss the dispute that Iraq "would not make any further declarations" on its arms production plans. At the same time, Iraq has "cancelled" a second round of talks with the UN about resuming oil sales.

The security council

authorized Iraq last August to sell \$1.6 billion (£890 million) of oil over a six-month period so that it could buy food and other essential supplies for its population. But the resolution allowing the sale required about one-third of the total to go towards financing the UN compensation fund for Gulf war victims and the UN programme to eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

After months of stalling, Iraq opened talks about a possible oil sale with the United Nations in Vienna last month. However, Abdul Amir al-Anbari, the Iraqi ambassador at the UN, now says that Baghdad considers UN restrictions on the proposed oil sale unacceptable and will not pursue the talks.

Exiled Iraqi Muslim Shias said yesterday that army units had been deployed recently along the main Baghdad highway to Amara, south of the Iraqi capital, after Shia demonstrations.



Novelty line: a woman demonstrating a mobile telephone yesterday claimed by its Japanese maker, NEC Corporation, the computer firm, to be the world's smallest. "It is very convenient — small and light enough to slip into a shirt pocket," an NEC official said. The P4 weighs 7.76oz, is

0.83in thick, 2.2in wide and 6in long. The telephone will make its debut in America this month and will be marketed in more than 30 countries, though not in Japan. Kotaro Kato, an NEC manager, said. It will cost about \$1,800 (£990) and NEC expects to sell 60,000 a month. (Reuters)

Paymaster looks for UN reward

FROM JOANNA PITMAN IN TOKYO

JAPAN is convinced it deserves a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council and, while anxious not to be seen twisting arms, aims for a seat in 1995, the UN's 50th anniversary year.

At last week's security council summit, Kiichi Miyazawa, the Japanese prime minister, dropped hints about Japan's ambitions and proposed discussions on the structure of the UN in the light of the new post-cold war world order.

His hints were tentative and Mr Miyazawa received the usual reminders that the inclusion of Japan in the security council's permanent membership would require an unprecedented change in the UN charter.

However, Japan takes so much in the fact that the validity of the council's structure, which Japan believes obsolete, is at last coming under scrutiny from the rest of the world.

Tokyo is one of the UN's chief paymasters (contributing more than Britain and France combined), yet is blocked from permanent membership and denied "reasonable" executive representation in the UN.

Korean plotters executed

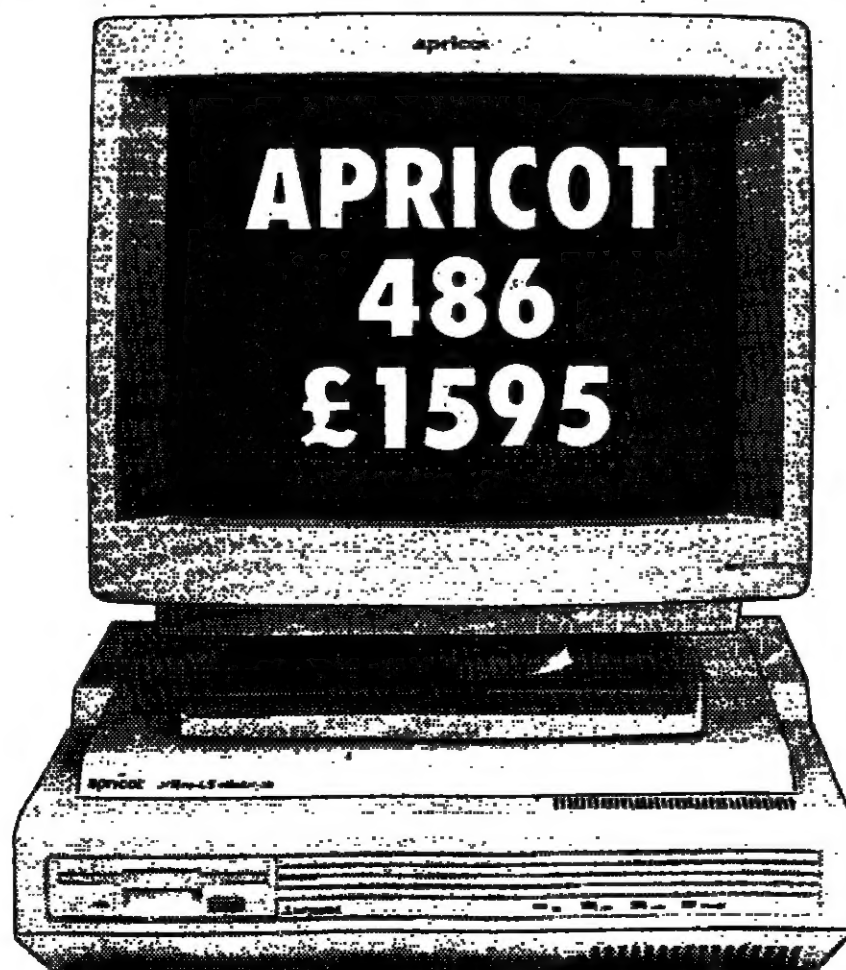
FROM AFP IN SEOUL

NORTH Korea has executed more than ten people for a plot against Kim Jong Il, who took over the country's military command in December from his father, President Kim Il Sung, according to a Japanese newspaper.

The *Sankai Shimbun* reported from Seoul that among those executed were three middle-ranking military officers, including a regimental commander, and an unspecified number of officials from the public security ministry. The newspaper said Western intelligence learnt of the coup attempt from Chinese sources. The incident took place last year but no precise date or other details were made available.

The intelligence sources said rumours were circulating in the Chinese-Korean border area that the plotters tried to replace Mr Kim Jong Il with Mr Kim Sung Il, the president's illegitimate child. North Korea's news agency issued rare photographs of Mr Kim Jong Il as part of the buildup to his 30th birthday on February 16 amid rumours that he would soon succeed his father as state president.

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20MHz 386SX	2Mb	100Mb	£1395	£1595
20MHz 486SX	4Mb	50Mb	£1595	£1795
20MHz 486SX	4Mb	100Mb	£1795	£1995
20MHz 486SX	4Mb	240Mb	£2145	£2345

All models include 1.44" floppy drive, keyboard, MS-DOS, hard disk models also include Windows 3.0 & mouse

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New Accounts no longer available	Half Yearly	10.14	7.61
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Inkatha 'organised attacks on ANC'

Gang man says police aided black violence

FROM GAVIN BELL IN JOHANNESBURG

A CATALOGUE of intrigue and murder in South Africa's black townships, allegedly involving policemen, is emerging from a judicial commission of enquiry into political violence.

A young man testified yesterday that the Inkatha Freedom party, led by Chief Mangosuthu Buthe, recruited members of a criminal gang known as the Black Cats to attack supporters of the African National Congress with the backing of Inkatha gunmen. The man, a former member of the gang, said they had been provided with firearms and trained by a man with a South African police identification card, before embarking on a killing spree in Wesselson, in the eastern Transvaal. On one occasion, he said, they fire-bombed a lawyer's office at the suggestion of a local policeman.

The witness, whose identity was not disclosed, spoke of tension between the Black

Cats and a civic association allied to the ANC, which led to violence and ultimately the gang's recruitment by Inkatha. According to his testimony, the gang was formed in Wesselson early in 1990, supposedly as a vigilante group to combat crime. However, some members turned to assault and robbery, incurring the ire of the local civic association.

When the home of a gang member was burned down, the Black Cats assaulted civic leaders, and were in turn attacked by civic supporters and a large group from another township. At this point, an official of an Inkatha-affiliated trade union offered the gang support if it joined Inkatha. A group of armed men from Ufundi in the KwaZulu tribal homeland, the Inkatha stronghold, arrived to escort a funeral procession for a gang member killed in the clashes. They encountered a funeral party for an ANC supporter and

opened fire on the crowd, killing two people.

In August 1990, most of the Black Cats were taken to KwaZulu for training about firearms and abduction techniques. On their return to Wesselson, Inkatha was formally launched in the township and Chris Ngwenya, the gang leader, was elected to its local committee. He is now the chairman of the Inkatha youth brigade in the nearby town of Ermelo.

The gang then stepped up its attacks on ANC supporters with guns, grenades and knives, and gained the upper hand with the assistance of a policeman, the witness said. Funerals continued to precipitate clashes.

A peace agreement signed by Inkatha and the ANC last year has failed to curb political violence in the townships. Police said yesterday that four people were shot dead in their beds in a Natal township by unidentified men with AK47 rifles.

Israel's poor pin hope on election

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN PETAH TIKVA, ISRAEL

IF YITZHAK Shamir, the Israeli prime minister, ever suffers re-election jitters, then the muddy caravan site located on the edge of Petah Tikva deserves to figure in his campaign manager's bad dreams.

Buffeted by the wind and rain of a winter gale, the 240 mobile homes at Kfar Syrkin provide at best minimalist housing for the Soviet immigrant and homeless Israeli families living in cramped conditions behind paper-thin glassfibre walls.

"We have never regretted coming to Israel," said Yelena, who left her native Uzbekistan two years ago with her husband and two daughters to escape the outbreak of bloody ethnic riots. "We are proud of being Israelis, but we are facing severe problems with finding jobs and somewhere decent to live."

Her complaints about government neglect and the problems of adjusting to life



At bay: Palestinian women yesterday trying to stop an Israeli policeman from arresting one of them at an east Jerusalem protest rally. Six women out of about 50 at the rally were held.

In a new home can be heard in similarly squalid settings the length and breadth of Israel, from the desert development city of Beersheba in the south to the Galilean towns of Carmel and Nazareth in the north.

Unemployment, already at a record level of more than 10 per cent, is rising

steadily, more than half a million Israelis are below the poverty line, and badly needed American financial assistance, in the form of \$10 billion (\$5.55 billion) in loan guarantees, has been delayed for nearly a year because of Israel's expansion of its Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

"We will probably have to live in this caravan for four or five years, and yet the government spends its money in areas where no one wants to live," Yelena said. While the complaints of the new immigrants have become a routine part of Israeli life, suddenly Yelena and other members of Isra-

el's disgruntled underclass are discovering that politicians are ready to listen, particularly since elections are planned for June 23, when the 250,000 first-time Soviet immigrant voters could decide as many as ten Knesset seats, enough to make or break the future Israeli government.

Why are there so many repeats on TV?

EMERGENCY
APPEAL
FOR ETHIOPIA

BANGLADESH
TIDAL WAVE
APPEAL

ERITREA AND TIGRAY
EMERGENCY

URGENT
APPEAL FOR
ERITREA

MOZAMBIQUE
EMERGENCY
APPEAL

CRISIS
IN AFRICA
APPEAL

MEXICO
EARTHQUAKE
DISASTER

SUDAN
EMERGENCY
APPEAL

BANGLADESH
CYCLONE DISASTER
APPEAL

Every year we see appeal after appeal on behalf of the Third World. Why is this?

Is it because there are more disasters in the Third World?

No. Earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and droughts happen throughout the world. But in the developed countries, life quickly returns to normal.

In the Third World, on the other hand, disasters are compounded by poverty, with desperate consequences.

For example, last year in Bangladesh, a cyclone killed over 50,000 people. This was largely because families were forced to live on land prone to flooding because they were too poor to live anywhere safer.

Turning back to the original question, perhaps then there are more appeals because there are more wars?

There are wars all around the globe, but it is in the poorest countries that they have the most catastrophic consequences. For example, in Ethiopia, the war drove people from their once fertile farms, causing food

shortages and widespread starvation.

Here's another reason that's often given for the Third World's troubles: they don't know how to run their countries.

But the fact is, governments everywhere are fallible. However, the Third World pays much more dearly for its mistakes.

Look at the Third World Debt - a mistake made jointly by the countries that did the lending and those that did the borrowing. No one gains, but the poor lose more than most.

For example, in 1989 in Sudan, hundreds of thousands of people starved to death. Yet at the same time, the Sudanese government gave \$97,000,000 to the West in debt repayments.

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Refugees threaten Kenya

FROM SAM KILEY IN NAIROBI

TENS of thousands of refugees from the civil war in Somalia have fled to Kenya, threatening the country's stability and putting a severe strain on already depleted food stocks, the United Nations said yesterday.

Silvestro Awyue, representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Nairobi, said the number of Somali refugees in Kenya had risen from 15,000 to 90,000 since the civil war restarted last November. Every day 300 people, mostly children, were dying in the Liboi camp on the Kenya-Somali border, he said.

Many of the Somalis arriving in Kenya were heavily armed, and although the Kenyan army had attempted to take their guns away, Mr Awyue said that shooting could be heard every night in the camps. Two days ago a five-day-old child was killed by a stray bullet in Liboi and last week a Somali aid worker was shot by robbers in Ifa, the main UN camp, about 60 miles west of the frontier.

Kenya already faces a severe food shortage after drought in the east and north of the country, poor harvests, and bad management of the national cereals and produce board, which this week announced that it would have to import 1.1 million tonnes of maize by the end of March.

The World Food Programme estimates that the number of Somali refugees in Kenya will have swelled to 140,000 within two months. At present they are arriving at a rate of 1,000 a day.



Egyptians question 'spy pair'

Cairo: Egyptian security officials claimed yesterday that two Israeli Arabs detained on suspicion of spying for Israel had tried to cultivate a senior Egyptian military officer who alerted the authorities (Christopher Walker writes).

The two, a man aged 41 and his language student daughter, were still being interrogated yesterday awaiting formal charges. Their arrest in Cairo on Monday poses a serious threat to Israel-Egyptian relations. The semi-official Egyptian press said both had visited Egypt a number of times on tourist visas.

City cut off

Algiers: New clashes were reported between security forces and Muslim fundamentalists in Batna, where three days of fighting have claimed 11 lives. The eastern Algerian city of 200,000 people was cut off from the rest of the country. (AP)

Camp toll rises

Hong Kong: Police searching a gutted hut for clues after Tuesday's arson attack at a Hong Kong camp for Vietnamese boat people found the body of a child, taking the death toll to 22. A group of 92 Vietnamese were charged with rioting. (Reuters)

Voters clash

Dhaka: At least 25 people were killed in Bangladesh in clashes between rival groups which wrecked voting in some 300 constituencies during the fortnight of mayoral elections. More than 1,500 people were arrested for causing unrest and vote-rigging.

Haiti reward

Port-au-Prince: Brigadier-General Raoul Cedras, aged 42, who led the September 30 coup that ousted President Aristide, was promoted to lieutenant-general. The general emphasised the need to "preserve independence at any price". (AFP)

Rescue riddle for a crumbling Sphinx

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN CAIRO

A JUDICIAL investigation concluded yesterday that the fall of a 660lb slab of stone from the right shoulder of the battered Sphinx in February 1988 was the work of nature and not of man.

The Egyptian committee's long-awaited report exonerated the late Dr Ahmed Kadri. He was dismissed from his post as chief of the Egyptian antiquities organisation for allegedly causing the damage by permitting shoddy restoration work on the 4,600-year-old statue which guards the pyramids at Giza.

The committee of archaeological experts and university professors which carried out the investigation was established after an American Egyptologist made a formal complaint to the police about the fall, the most serious disaster to happen to the statue for many years.

The finding took into account blame placed by experts on a range of factors for the accelerating deteriora-

tion of the enigmatic creature which has, according to Dr Sayid Tawfik, Dr Kadri's successor, disintegrated more in the past 50 years than in all its previous centuries combined.

These include the effect of atmospheric and underground pollutants from over-populated Cairo and vibrations from work in nearby quarries. "Scholars from Egypt and around the world have given us good advice," Dr Tawfik said, "but nobody has been able to come up with a sure way to save our wonderful Sphinx."

In a new attempt to save the statue, Farouk Hosni, the culture minister, has convened a conference in Cairo this month of the world's leading experts on the Sphinx. It will include scientists from America, France, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland and Canada who will be asked to suggest ways of saving the country's most famous face.

**Chores
keep the
hausfrau
happy**

FROM PATRICK MOTHER
IN BONN

IN GERMANY, a country often thought to be in the front line of the battle for equality of the sexes, the kitchen is still a woman's place — and not many German women are bothered about it. That at least is the impression given by a survey presented yesterday by Angela Merkel, Bonn's women's affairs minister.

Cleaning the house is also still considered by many to be a woman's job, if the survey is to be believed: 77 per cent of women in western Germany clean the home without help from the man in the house, and 78 per cent do the cooking without any help from their male partner. The figures for eastern Germany are 70 per cent and 74 per cent respectively.

"Nine per cent of women in the west [of Germany] and 7 per cent in the east believe the man should do more in the house," the IPOS research institute said in the study commissioned by the ministry. Yet 60 per cent of the 2,633 Germans interviewed believe more should be done for equality.

FOUR soldiers and a civilian died when a car bomb exploded in the heart of Madrid yesterday, increasing fears that Eta, the Basque separatist organisation, is determined to mar this year's Olympic Games. The morning rush-hour blast also wounded six people, one of them seriously.

The soldiers killed — three officers and their driver — were in a van which was passing when the bomb exploded just outside an army building, the Captainty-General of Madrid. The fifth victim was a civil servant who worked for the army.

The bomb was a 90lb shrapnel-packed device. By

nightfall, no organisation had admitted planting it, but the assumption is that it was Eta's work. The blast was the first terrorist incident in Madrid this year. Last month, Eta gunmen murdered five people in attacks in Barcelona, Bilbao and Valencia.

The explosion has intensified fears not only for the Olympics in Barcelona but for two other international events in Spain this year: the Expo '92 World Fair in Seville and Madrid's period as European city of culture. Earlier this week, the mayors of the three cities were called to the capital to meet José Luis Corcuera, the interior minister, to discuss the security problems caused by terrorism.

The defence ministry has already detailed members of the armed forces to co-operate with the police during the Olympics and Expo '92. But, as Pasqual Maragall, the mayor of Barcelona, admitted yesterday, the big security problem remains the five-month run-up to the games.

Felipe González, the prime minister, called a press conference yesterday soon after the explosion to announce that he was asking the attorney-general to investigate whether apologists for Eta should be allowed to continue with impunity to defend the

organisation's violent independence campaign. He clearly had in mind the political party called Herri Batasuna, a small group in the Basque country which sympathises with Eta's aims.

There has been talk in recent days of proscribing the organisation, whose leaders frequently feature on television and radio and in the press to defend Eta's actions. Señor González said it was intolerable that "so-called political leaders who are no more than shameful servants of terrorist mafias should continue to issue threats against the state with apparent impunity".

Yesterday's attack also comes amid rumours that Eta may have been planning temporarily to suspend its violent activities in an attempt to persuade the Madrid government to negotiate with it. Señor González made it clear that there would be no political deals with terrorists. His government, he said, would not bow to this "bloody blackmail".



Fire brigade: workers making the final preparations yesterday for the Olympic torch at Albertville, France, which will be lit tomorrow at the start of the 16th winter Games. In a break with tradition, the flame will not be lit directly. Instead, a runner will

climb 80 steps and use the Olympic torch, lit in Greece, to start a ball of fire burning along a cable up to the huge bowl 100ft above the ground. Organisers were due to announce yesterday who will light the flame. It was anticipated that the honour would go

to Nathalie Bouvier, the French skier. Bouvier, aged 22, the downhill silver-medal winner at last year's world championships in Austria, would have been one of France's main medal hopes but has been unable to compete since she broke both legs a year ago.

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK
AND TIM JUDAH IN BELGRADE

CROATIA yesterday dropped its objections to the deployment of United Nations peacekeepers in the former Yugoslav republic, leaving only one rebel Serb leader blocking the implementation of the plan.

Franjo Tudjman, Croatia's president, informed the UN Security Council that he was now ready to accept the deployment of 10,000 UN peacekeepers in the three Serb enclaves in Croatia. Diplomats here said that Milan Babic, the leader of the Serb enclave of Krajina, was the only remaining opponent of the UN "blue berets". Several senior Western envoys expressed hope that Mr Babic could be brought into line by pressure from the Serb-dominated rump federal presidency in Belgrade.

Dr Tudjman had initially accepted the UN proposal to create UN-protected areas in Krajina and eastern and western Slavonia, where the majority of Croatia's 600,000 Serbs live. But when member states of the European Community recognised Croatia last month, he insisted that the Zagreb government retain control over local government and the police in any UN-patrolled areas.

His change of policy was an embarrassment to Germany.

which led the move to recognise Croatia, and he came under intense German pressure to revert to his original stance. He did so in a letter to the security council less than an hour before it was to meet to discuss a draft resolution calling on both sides to accept the UN peacekeeping plan unconditionally.

In an attempt to head off the violent disintegration of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the European Community is to broker talks next week in Sarajevo, the republic's capital. The move was announced yesterday after Lord Carrington, the chairman of the EC peace conference on Yugoslavia, held talks in Sarajevo on the second day of his trip to the country.

Despite the bitter invective traded between the leaders of the three groups that make up Bosnia — Croats, Serbs and Muslims — they have never stopped talking. The leader of the main Serb party, Radovan Karadzic, said: "Carrington said 'maybe you could speed up talks if they were supervised by the EC.'" It was not clear yesterday if Lord Carrington, already known to be exasperated by the practical collapse of the existing EC peace talks, would chair the Bosnian conference himself.

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ZAGREB

The outbreak of peace in Yugoslavia could leave hundreds of foreign mercenaries, most of whom threw in their lot with Croatia, out of a job. Scores of disgruntled soldiers of fortune, evidently feeling they are not getting enough fighting, have begun drifting away from the static front lines at the Slavonian towns of Osijek and Vinkovci since Yugoslavia's longest lasting ceasefire came into effect on January 3.

Some volunteers believe the Zagreb authorities would not be unhappy to see the often unpredictable foreign warriors depart, now that the hastily formed Croatian army has achieved a modicum of organisation. "I don't think it will even be thanks and goodbye," said Ken from Portsmouth gloomily over gin and tonic at Zagreb's Esplanade hotel, a favourite haunt of mercenaries. "Just 'goodbye', and the C's said it on their own. I don't think it will be staying much longer."

One group of Britons was sent on enforced leave from Vinkovci last week to languish at the Barona barracks in Zagreb. In the beer cellar

under Osijek's main square, "Captain Carl" from Liverpool, second-in-command of the "First International Brigade" grouping soldiers from a dozen nationalities rested his sub-machinegun by a dimly lit table and said another group of Britons left last week. "They couldn't see the point of staying during the ceasefire." He said morale is good among five Englishmen in the International Brigade.

Firm estimates of the number of foreigners left are hard to come by. Allan Hetherington-Clarke, a general in the Australian army who said he had been appointed "commander international" Zagreb, "claimed English-speaking soldiers alone still number as many as 500.

Brigadier Karlo Goricanec, commander of the Croatian first operational zone, covering 200 miles of front including Osijek and Vinkovci, said "In our operational zone there are few foreigners — 20 or 30 let us say." Tounka Jelic, an Australian who is the new public relations officer for the international Brigade, said it numbers 70 recruits.

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Russia gives freedom to last political prisoners

FROM BRUCE CLARK IN MOSCOW

IN A symbolic end to one of the grimmest chapters in 20th-century history, ten people regarded by the authorities as the last political prisoners in Russia will today walk free from the notorious Perm 35 forced labour camp.

Their release from a prison well known for its freezing isolation cells and starvation diet is intended to give substance to President Yeltsin's claim before the United Nations last week that "in free Russia there are no political prisoners". The freeing of the ten will also underpin Mr Yeltsin's contention that his country, which in its Soviet incarnation used to react with fury at Western criticism of its human rights record, now positively welcomed monitoring by foreign governments and lobby groups.

In its zeal to stamp out an institution that won the Soviet Union the opprobrium of the world, the Russian authorities may even have interpreted the concept of "prisoner of conscience" even more broadly than many Western countries. As of a year ago, the Soviet authorities were able to claim that they had released from Perm all prisoners convicted under the notorious article 70 of the penal code, which proscribes "agitation and propaganda against the state". But human rights groups countered that the prison still contained about a dozen inmates who were convicted of crimes — such as selling military secrets or even manslaughter — carried out in the course of politically inspired acts, such as illegal crossing of the border.

No less an authority than Oleg Kalugin, the former KGB's counter-intelligence chief, contended this week that "Russia is perhaps the freest country in the world", given that "there are no controls on the media, no restrictions on human rights and no

political prisoners". In a debate in the Russian parliament this week, much was made of the fact that the republic's new security ministry — the successor to the KGB — will have no department whose specific purpose is to monitor and harass ideological and religious dissent.

But many a Russian liberal fears that the republic's current zeal to meet the highest international standards on human rights represents only an isolated moment in the country's history as it swings from the communist form of totalitarianism to a neo-fascist variety. Already the human rights record of several of Russia's partners in the commonwealth — notably Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan — has prompted acute concern among international rights campaigners.

Conservative diehards, for their part, have launched a campaign for the release of a dozen elderly men they call "political prisoners" — the generals and the party bureaucrats who mounted the August coup against Mikhail Gorbachev.

Izvestia sent a team of reporters to visit the conspirators in the jail on the outskirts of Moscow and last night published photographs of them, as well as a shot of the former Soviet prime minister, Valentin Pavlov, looking hardly less portly than before. Vasil Starodubtsev, the hard-line farmers' leader who was a member of the ill-fated eight-man junta, told Izvestia's correspondents: "I have no complaints, apart from the fact that I am innocent."

As well as wading through dozens of volumes of evidence against them accumulated by the Russian public prosecutor, Mr Starodubtsev said that he fretted about the "total collapse and catastrophe" that was now facing the country's agriculture.

Yeltsin fears fascist upsurge

FROM PHILIP JACOBSON IN PARIS

PRESIDENT Yeltsin yesterday gave his most vivid warning yet of the dangers facing Russia's fledgling democracy if the West does not fully back his reform programme.

He told a reception in the town hall to mark his state visit to France that without such support "a dictatorship will emerge". Everything his government had achieved would be threatened by opponents on the extreme right.

"I have faith in the reforms, which are irreversible," he said. "But should they fail, I can already feel the breath on our neck of those who wear the black and the brown shirts." Faced with that, Mr Yeltsin insisted, "we have the right to count on the international community for help".

Evidently anxious to bolster his case in France, already the second biggest lender to the Commonwealth of Independent States, Mr Yeltsin said that Russia was ready to make big reductions in its strategic nuclear arsenal. Of France's refusal to cut back on its own nuclear forces, he said: "We respect that position... we hope that once the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons is underway in Russia, France will in turn refrain from augmenting such armaments."



Triumphal exit: Mr Yeltsin is ushered past a Republican Guard after a ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe

The Russian leader's discussions with President Mitterrand on Wednesday were apparently also dominated by the issue of nuclear disarmament. An Elysée Palace adviser said afterwards that there had been a "convergence of views on the notion of defence sufficiency, of minimal deterrents". This seemed to suggest that Mr Yeltsin prudently did not repeat the view he expressed before leaving Moscow that France must reduce its nuclear capacity in response to disarmament by the superpowers.

Mr Yeltsin responded to the warmth of his welcome in France, and to the encouraging news that Russia will get the lion's share of some \$415 million in French credits previously allocated to the Soviet Union, by predicting "an entirely new relationship between our two states for many years to come".

For their part, French officials were still doing their best to bury unhappy memories of the Elysée's snub of Mr Yeltsin on a previous visit to Paris during the Gorbachev era. M Mitterrand's aides

were yesterday spreading praise of the Russian leader's direct and open style of doing business. Yesterday's official programme even provided for Mr Yeltsin and his wife Naina to meet an admittedly carefully selected assortment of Russians who had chosen exile in Paris in preference to continuing to live under communism.

Kiev lets Crimea have voice

Kiev: Ukraine yesterday granted residents of Crimea the right to take part in decisions about the future of their autonomous peninsula, including division of property. A high-level delegation from Kiev signed a joint statement on division of powers with Crimean authorities. It also provided for the creation of a free economic zone in the region. (Reuters)

Port falls

Moscow: Georgia's military council said its troops have captured the port of Sukhumi, the last stronghold loyal to Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the ousted president, virtually ending weeks of bloody resistance. It was occupied without a shot. (Reuters)

US pledges aid

Riga: Vice-President Quayle, visiting Estonia and Latvia, pledged extra American aid of \$18 million (£10 million) for the three Baltic states and endorsed swift withdrawal of Russian troops from their territories. He will be in Lithuania today. (Reuters)

Poverty bites

Moscow: Russia's rush towards a market economy has pushed 95 per cent of Moscow's residents below the poverty line, Yuri Lushkov, the city's deputy mayor, said in the latest in a series of gloomy reports on shortages and high prices. (AP)

Siberian town shivers in dark

While the federation awaits energy cuts, in one Siberian city they have already happened, Peter Conradi writes from Khabarovsk

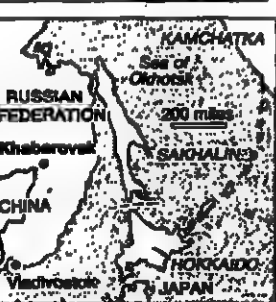
When Lyudmila Golovina came home with her new baby from maternity hospital this winter, she found there was no central heating, hot water or gas in her block of flats. Like tens of others who lived in the building, she responded by plugging in a portable heater. It blew the fuses, plunging the whole building into darkness as well. It then took several days before all the connections were finally restored.

"It has been the same story all over the city," said her father, Valeri, a journalist on a local newspaper. "They simply did not prepare for the cold." It has been a hard winter for Khabarovsk, an industrial city near the Chinese border, where the temperature regularly plunges to -25C and a bitter wind blows almost continuously across the frozen Amur river. While the rest of Russia waits for the oil to run out, Khabarovsk's 600,000 people can be forgiven for thinking that they have been through it all already.

Since November, one by one, whole sections of the city have been blacked out and deprived of energy. Several thousand people had to see in the new year by candlelight.

For the time being at least, the situation appears to have stabilised. Some 200 million roubles (£20 million at official tourist rates) of special aid were promised and, in typical Russian fashion, the appearance of the bosses from the far-away capital generated the superhuman effort that was necessary to work miracles.

The weather, too, has warmed slightly, edging a few degrees up towards freezing point. Even so, it will be well into April before the snow eventually melts across Russia's far east, and another icy burst could prove



disastrous. At least in their harshness, this winter's troubles appear to have been unique to Khabarovsk. Other cities in the region have suffered temporary breakdowns both this year and last.

According to the locals, the most plausible explanation is that nobody got around to carrying out the annual prophylactic repairs that every piece of Soviet-made machinery requires. But it is also a symptom of a broader energy problem affecting much of the former Soviet Union. The anti-nuclear sentiment provoked by the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in 1986 blew a hole in the country's energy programme by forcing the closure of several existing plants and the cancellation of new ones. Oil output, meanwhile, has been plummeting.

The problems are compounded by the highly centralised heating and hot water system which keeps most Russian cities going through the winter. In theory, it is an admirable communal service, banishing all fears of hypothermia and providing cheap, plentiful energy for all.

In practice, it is a highly inefficient and complex system which requires almost continuous care and attention. Necessarily, by pumping heat over large distances in sub-zero temperatures in unlagged pipes, it also ends up losing as much as 50 per cent of it along the way.

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'Stupid Tyson was butt of joke'

FROM CHARLES BRENNER IN INDIANAPOLIS

DESIREE Washington, the woman who accused Mike Tyson of rape, joked about the boxer's money and stupidity after he asked her out for the evening, a rival beauty contestant told the court yesterday.

In defence testimony aimed at countering the saintly portrait of Ms Washington painted by the prosecution, Marilyn Whittingden said she had bumped into the accuser in the bathroom just after Tyson had visited the contestants in the Miss Black America beauty pageant in Indianapolis last July. "She told me she had met Tyson and was going to go out with him. I said, 'Are you really going to?' She said, 'Of course I'm going. He's Mike Tyson and he's got a lot of money and he's dumb. You saw what Robin Givens got out of him.'"

Robin Givens was the actress to whom Tyson was briefly married while he was world heavyweight champion. She won more than \$10 million from him after suing for divorce on the ground of physical cruelty.

Last week, Ms Washington, a university student and Sunday school teacher, said she had made any such statement.

Attempt to outflank Democrats

Health care for all pledged by Bush

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Bush yesterday moved to negate one of the Democrats' strongest suits in the forthcoming presidential election by unveiling a plan that he pledged would give all Americans access to "the world's best health care".

He offered a system of vouchers and tax credits to give health insurance to the 35 million Americans who presently cannot afford it, and to alleviate the exploding costs of insurance for middle-income families.

The plan, vehemently denounced by the Democrats, would cost \$100 billion (£55.2 billion), as it was implemented over the next five years, and \$35 billion a year thereafter, but with America's budget deficit already at record levels Mr Bush ducked the question of how it would be paid for.

At the last moment he had deleted proposals to raise funds by taxing the employer-paid benefits of highly paid workers and deeply cutting the Medicare programme for the elderly. These steps were considered politically too dangerous in an election year.

Mr Bush instead offered Congress 38 pages of financing options, leaving them to make the tough decisions. In doing so, he virtually ensuring that there will be no legis-



Gephardt: called the plan "totally deficient"

lation enacted in the foreseeable future, but this was an exercise in political posturing to begin with.

Polls show health care and its exorbitant costs to be one of the most potent electoral issues this year. It is one on which the Democrats have so far made all the running, proposing that employers would be taxed to finance a national insurance scheme if they did not buy private health insurance for their workers. One poll said that Americans trust the Democrats rather than Mr Bush on the issue, by a 60 per cent to 29 per cent margin.

Mr Bush had to come up with some counter-proposal,

lest he appeared indifferent, but one clearly based on a market-driven philosophy. Setting the tone for the coming campaign, he said in Cleveland, Ohio: "My plan will preserve what works, and reform what doesn't." The Democrats' proposals were "a prescription for disaster ... a back-door route to nationalised health care" that would create a hugely expensive new bureaucracy no one wanted.

"When you get right down to it, there are two fundamental health care choices," said Mr Bush, who was flying on to the West Coast to promote his plan. "We can adopt a system that's been a proven failure all over the world — nationalised health care. Or we can reform our present system, which has its faults, certainly, but which can also provide the highest-quality care on Earth."

Richard Gephardt, the House majority leader, called it "totally deficient" and a "non-plan" that "will put more money into the pockets of insurance companies and doctors, but will do nothing to make health coverage affordable or ensure Americans have access to quality care". The plan envisages that American families with annual incomes of up to \$50,000 can receive up to \$3,750 a year, through tax credits, tax deductions or vouchers to pay for health care. Mr Bush also called for new limits on medical malpractice lawsuit settlements.

America spent \$27.1 billion on health care in 1990, a figure that has now soared to \$73 billion, more than any other industrial country.



Death charges: Dr Jack Kevorkian, who advocated doctor-assisted suicide for the seriously ill, listening to his indictment in Oakland County circuit court, Pontiac, Michigan. Dr Kevorkian was arrested this week in connection with the deaths of two seriously ill women who used the "suicide

machine" invented by him. A grand jury indicted him on Monday on two counts of murder and one count of delivery of a controlled substance, the Oakland prosecutor said. Dr Kevorkian's lawyer said the ending of the suffering of two chronically ill women was an act of humanity.

Peaceful battle begins

The presidents of Russia and South Africa, Boris Yeltsin, and F.W. de Klerk, and anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela are among nominees for the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize, it was reported in Oslo. "So far we've received 105 nominations for 83 individuals and 22 organisations," Geir Lundestad, head of the Nobel Institute, said. The winner will be announced in October.

Jean-Pierre Rampal, whose lyrical flute-playing has captivated the world, said before a 70th birthday celebration at the Lincoln Centre, New York: "I cannot understand why America is so violent." Of the ubiquitous personal stereo, he added: "We are arriving to (sic) a generation of deaf people. It's a catastrophe."

A horse-drawn funeral carriage followed by hundreds of fans and dozens of musicians carried the body of Willie Dixon through the South Side streets of Chicago to the sounds of music he made famous. Dixon died in California last week at the age of 76. Bands stood on corners along a route down Muddy Waters Drive and past the Checker Board Lounge where Dixon was a fixture for years.

Former French prime minister Michel Rocard has been honoured by Australia for his work to protect the Antarctic. Rocard was appointed an honorary Companion of the Order of Australia, the nation's highest honour, which he received for the central role he played in delivering French government support to Australia's attempt to ban mining in the Antarctic.

Iran plans to make a documentary film on the political life of its revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini, who died in 1989, said Muhammad Ali Ansari, who added that Khomeini's shrine, south of Tehran, would be expanded into a "touristic and science-oriented" complex.

A Lebanese daily newspaper, *ad-Diyar*, said police had stopped it publishing an interview with rebel Christian general, Michel Aoun, who is now living in exile in France. Police listened to a taped recording of the interview then barred publication.

A parchment scroll offering the freedom of Nottingham Castle and Sherwood Forest to Kevin Costner, of Hollywood's *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves*, was signed by the Sheriff of Nottingham and the county council chairman.

Monkeys drive police nuts

FROM JOANNA PITMAN IN TOKYO

LEANING forward gingerly over his holstered pistol, Police Sergeant Toda played mother to a group of children, pouring tea from a pink Donald Duck pot and handing round butterfly cakes.

But this was no infant-school tea-party. Sergeant Toda, aged 32, is the benevolent face of the law in Japan. He is the local bobby in Itsukaichi, a small mountain community 75 miles west of Tokyo. His home doubles as the police station and on most afternoons locals drop in for tea and a gossip.

One of 235 policemen in the Tokyo metropolitan area who operate from their homes, Sergeant Toda is responsible for 600 households spread over 50 square miles. That he can single-handedly cover his beat and still host tea parties says much about the local crime rate.

The scourge of his professional life is not murder or mugging, but monkeys. "Last week a wild monkey came down from the mountains and stole some carrots. I took details of the goods and suspect, but there is not much I can do," he said.

On a recent Saturday evening he was called out at 11.30 to deal with a distraught mother whose daughter, aged 25, had stayed out past her 11pm curfew. The previous day he had spent the morning coaxing a cat down from a persimmon tree and the afternoon mediating in a

trivial quarrel between the futon-maker and the sake brewer.

Sergeant Toda is a gun-toting nanny on Japan's national payroll; his charges, the inhabitants of Itsukaichi. In all his 13 years as a policeman, he has not once had the chance to use his pistol or his truncheon, for his beat is no more hazardous than that in Trumpton.

The most serious incident he can recall was the theft of £160 in 1987. "I got a telephone call about a robbery and rushed



round to the house, but the thief had fled the scene. I took fingerprints and I am still investigating the case, but it looks as if he got away."

Were Sergeant Toda to recognise his chief suspect driving past the police station tomorrow, he would not have much chance of arresting him, since his chief mode of transport is a bicycle.

Eichmann file 'not in archive'

FROM ED McCULLOUGH IN BUENOS AIRES

A NAZI hunter who studied seven Argentine government files dating back decades said that he was most struck by what was not there.

"Where is the Eichmann file?" Shimon Samuels, of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies, said on Wednesday. "The file that should have been the thickest of all is not there."

On Monday, President Menem ordered the national archives to collect information on Nazis who fled here after the war. Government agencies were given 30 days to comply. The seven federal police files included two each on Josef Mengele, the "Angel

of Death" at Auschwitz, and on Martin Bormann, Hitler's deputy. The others dealt with Nazis such as Walter Kuschmann and Edouard Roschmann, now dead; and Josef Schwammberger, aged 79, extradited to Germany in 1990 and on trial in Stuttgart for his alleged role in the deaths of Jews in forced labour camps.

But on the man who drew up plans to exterminate the Jews of Europe, and who was kidnapped here in 1960 by Israeli agents, tried, convicted, hanged and cremated — nothing. "I cannot accept that it is an oversight," Mr Samuels said. (AP)

Army coup enquiry clears politicians

FROM TONY BIANCHI IN CARACAS

THE Venezuelan government yesterday ruled out the participation of political factions and civilian movements in Tuesday's coup attempt by a group of army officers that belong to a right-wing nationalist clan. Virgilio Abila Vivas, the interior minister, said investigators have found no evidence of any political or civilian group being implicated in the aborted coup.

General Fernando Ochoa Anich, the defence minister, meanwhile, insisted that only 14 military officials were killed and 57 injured from both sides, denying reports that gave the death toll at 300. However, Caracas pol-

ice sources said that the final toll, which could not yet be confirmed, was likely to climb to 60.

The military command that remained loyal to President Pérez began to question captured officers and soldiers who made up the 1,600-man force that tried to assassinate the head of state and seize power. A high military court official said most of the rebel soldiers were believed to have been forced to fight and would probably be discharged without being sentenced. Rebel leaders could receive up to 25 years' imprisonment, be stripped of their ranks, and cashiered.

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Nintendo peril hits Hollywood

Charles Bremner on American fears of growing Japanese cultural power

A cartoon elicited a few bitter chuckles over American breakfast tables the other day, after Tokyo politicians delivered their latest shower of insults to Yankee pride. It featured a newsreader reporting that the Japanese had taken over motherhood, baseball and apple-pie, the three sacred symbols of America. Over the past week, as the prime minister, Kichi Miyazawa, has aired his own thoughts on American sloth, life has caught up with the cartoon and added a sadistic twist. A consortium led by the Nintendo company wants to take over the Mariners, the beloved baseball team of Seattle, and the town is begging the baseball authority to let them do so, because if the \$100 million deal fails, they will go to Florida. Even Tom Foley, the congressional speaker and Washington state native, has joined the drive to persuade Fay Vincent, the national baseball commissioner, to rescind the rule which bars any foreigners but Canadians from owning teams.

Beyond the northern Pacific rim, an area which long ago learned to trade and live with the Japanese, the notion of Nintendo saving the Mariners has been greeted with resignation and mourning. Is nothing sacred, ask talk-show hosts and commentators? "First they took our cars, now it's baseball," said a barman in Indianapolis, a good vantage point for gauging the anguish middle America is feeling over the triumph of the new evil empire, a force which has taken on the demonic image the Russians used to enjoy.

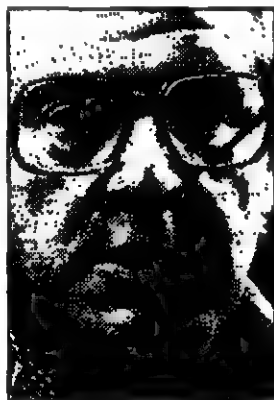
A month after President Bush's tragicomic trade trip to Tokyo, it seems to many Americans that the baseball episode is fresh evidence that the dreaded Japanese march on American culture has begun. Weren't all naive, goes the argument, to think that we could sell Hollywood, record companies and all those hotels, golf-courses and landmarks to the Japanese and then believe all their promises, like those made by Sony to Columbia Pictures, that they would "stay out of the creative process"?

There has been no shortage of ammunition in recent days for those who see the imminent replacement of Big Macs by Big Takemaki. On Monday, Michael Jackson was coaxed back onto planet earth to announce that he would undertake a world tour. Since everyone knows Mr Jackson is terrified of performing outside a studio these days, the pop press assumed that Sony, with whom Mr Jackson has a billion dollar multimedia contract, was worried about his sagging fortunes and had twisted his gloved arm. It escaped no one's attention that the venue for his appearance is the ar-deco splendour of the Radio City Music Hall, the jewel of that New York institution, the Rockefeller Centre, now owned by Mitsubishi.

Japanophobes had their worst fears confirmed on Wednesday with a headline in *The New York*

Times: "Hollywood Drops Film, Bowing to the Sumos". The burly wrestler had extinguished a Sony-Columbia film called *Hell Camp*, which was to have been directed by Milos Forman, the director of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Amadeus*. Sony and all the Americans in the \$25 million project are denying that it was cancelled because it painted an unflattering portrait of Japan's most popular sport. Maybe so, mused the *Times*, but why did a group of Hollywood's most seasoned moguls bow to the objections of a foreign sports federation? The Sumo episode reminded many of last year's affair over *Mr Baseball*, a film about the comic adventures of an American player in Japan, which was purged of anti-Japanese jokes after Matsushita took over Universal Studios.

A dark Japanese hand has been discerned behind revisions of a likely blockbuster novel published this week *Rising Sun* by Michael Crichton. This time Mr Crichton is not proposing planetary anni-



Milos Forman: his sumo film has been dropped

hilation from outer space, as he did in *The Andromeda Strain*, nor under the hooves of stampeding dinosaurs, as he did in *Jurassic Park*. His alien menace of 1992 bows and smiles a lot and wears a dark suit. Late last year, Knopf took the rare step of recalling advance copies from reviewers and replacing them with a "corrected" version, which softened some of Mr Crichton's harsher observations about Japan. There was absolutely no connection, insisted the author, with the fact that Matsushita-Universal had just agreed to finance a Steven Spielberg film of *Jurassic Park*.

Set in Los Angeles, the novel opens with the murder of a blonde who has been having sex with a sleazy Japanese tycoon on a conference table during the opening of the new headquarters of the Nakamoto Corporation. Ostensibly a whodunit, the book is really a seminar on the Japanese psyche and its influence in America. Half of *Los Angeles* from the police to the universities and press, has been bought by Nakamoto. As the hero detective puts it: "Whoever pays for an institution controls it. If the Japanese are willing to put up the money — and if the American government and American industry aren't — then the Japanese will control."

Some of the reviewers are accusing Mr Crichton of basic Japan-bashing, a sport which has stood in for baseball during this winter season, but the author and some fairly uncharitable politicians are treating the book as an intelligent "wake-up call" which supports the argument of those who believe that America, as an open, culturally diverse country, must learn to live with Japanese power. It can do this, they say, not by fleeing into protectionism and paranoia, but by strengthening native institutions and, if necessary, by borrowing some un-American models — such as a national industrial policy.

The Ashdown affair: two views on the conflict of public interest and privacy

When the actor Gordon Kaye lay in a hospital bed recovering from severe head injuries, a journalist and a photographer from the *Sunday Sport* gained access to his room, took pictures and conducted an "interview". He sought an injunction to stop them publishing, but found the only limited remedy that the court could provide was to order that there be no publication unless the newspaper made it clear the information was obtained without Mr Kaye's consent. The Court of Appeal later confirmed that "in English law there is no right to privacy".

The case of Paddy Ashdown, and the conduct of the press, again focuses attention on the limited extent to which English law protects the fundamental right to be left alone. In his statement on Wednesday, Mr Ashdown explained that he "was advised and believed that I had every right to defend my privacy".

The law does recognise the right to privacy in some contexts. The Broadcasting Complaints Commission has powers to adjudicate upon complaints of "unwarranted

News from the gutter

Everyone should have a right to be left alone, argues

David Pannick

infringement of privacy" in broadcast programmes. The right of rape victims to anonymity under the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1976, and the law of trespass also protects some aspects of privacy.

The law of confidence applies when information is secret, was imparted in circumstances of confidence, and has been used in an unauthorised way. These criteria were plainly satisfied in respect of the information stolen from the offices of Mr Ashdown's solicitor, which is why Mr Ashdown was granted an injunction to restrain publication by the *News of the World*.

But there are severe limits to the utility of an action for breach of confidence: there are many occasions when a newspaper has information which damages personal privacy but which has not been imparted in circumstances creating a duty of confidence.

Convention on Human Rights, to which the United Kingdom is party, asserts that (subject to exceptions) "everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence". Of course, it may not be easy to define the scope of a right to be left alone. What the public is interested in is not necessarily identical to what is in the public interest.

The laws of other countries do define a tort of invasion of privacy, however. For the law of this country to deny a remedy for such a wrong whatever the circumstances is to confound any sense of decency and to deprive individuals of protection of a right fundamental to their integrity. The press has shown few signs of taking the last chance to display self-control granted to it in 1990 by the Calcutt Committee.

What justifiably concerns opponents of a law of privacy is that

it would add to the power of the judiciary (not all of whom are known for their commitment to freedom of expression) to determine what we learn about public figures.

A solution would be for the law to recognise a right to privacy, with a remedy in damages for any breach. The judiciary would have no power to prevent the imparting of information to the public, but those newspapers which breached the right to privacy would have to compensate the victim, with exemplary damages being awarded to penalise the newspaper when there has been a flagrant abuse. Privacy law would echo libel law. Such a solution would accord with the practical reality demonstrated by Mr Ashdown's case: injunctions are of little value in seeking to stop the flow of information. But a legal duty to respect privacy would also impose on the press an obligation to consider with more care the consequences that publication may have for its victims.

David Pannick is a practising barrister and a fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.

Ashdown's loneliest day

The Liberal Democrat leader spoke about his future to Peter Riddell

A WEEK IN POLITICS

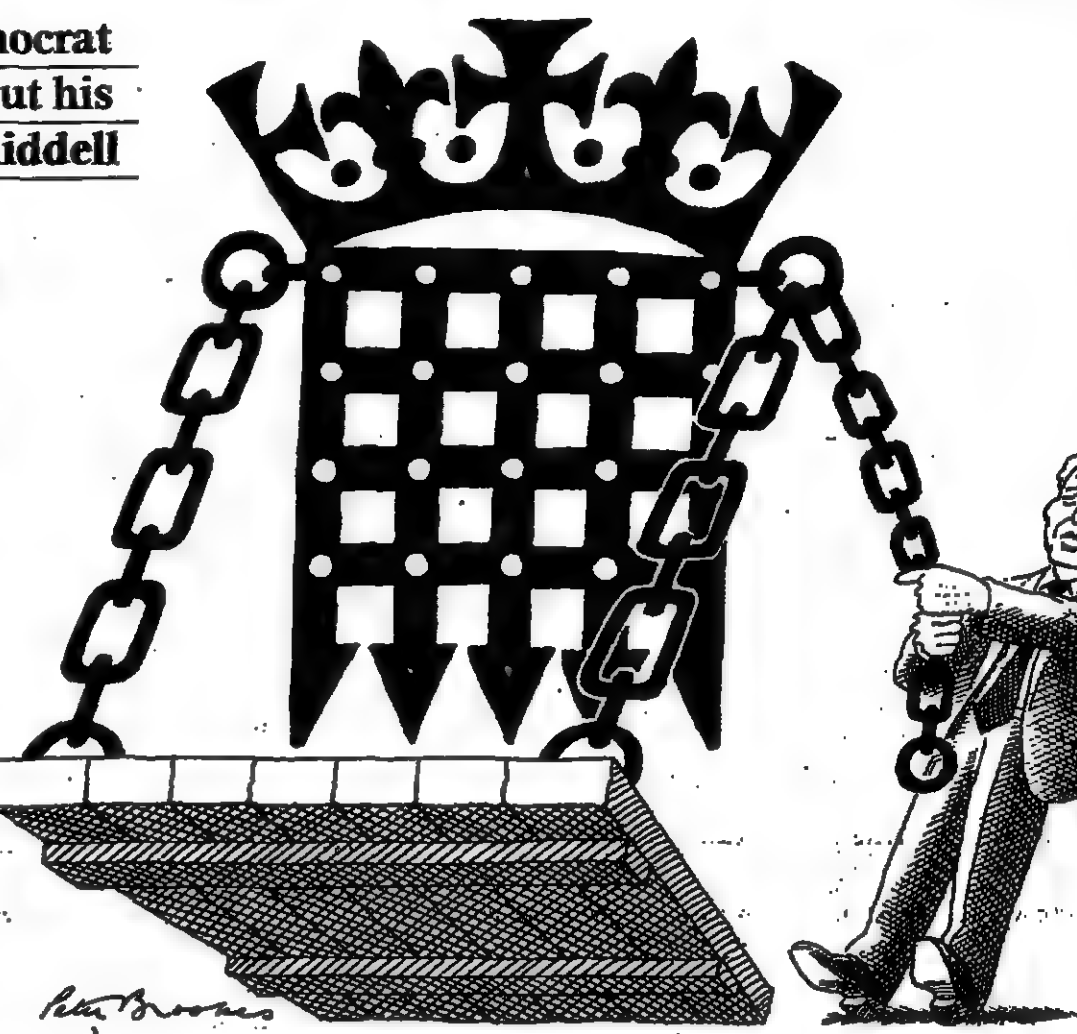
Paddy Ashdown has been bruised by the past week's events, however much he pretends that it is business as usual. Talking to me yesterday in his Westminster office, he was, understandably, slightly nervous and preoccupied with the details of the affair. He smoked a cigarette, which he never does in public.

Nevertheless, he was more resilient than I can imagine many politicians being in the same circumstances. Possibly as a legacy of his days in the services, he has remarkable self-control. Never an enthusiastic insider in the Westminster club, he can talk about politics in a detached, almost clinical way, with at times a chilling self-analysis. His language, his metaphors, are often more like those of a businessman than a politician.

Mr Ashdown recognises that there may be immediate political repercussions from his admission of his brief relationship with a former secretary more than five years ago. So far he has received strong support from parliamentary colleagues and from Liberal Democrats in the country. That is a reflection both of his success over the past three years and of political necessity: there is no alternative to closing ranks. When we talked, he had just returned from a consultation with party staff in Croydon Street and hearing reports from the regions.

There may be second thoughts in the next few days, and yesterday Mr Ashdown seemed braced for a short-term drop both in his own high personal popularity and his party's rating. His hope is clearly that most members of the public, as well as the political world, will treat his admission as an ordinary, and common, human failing.

If there is no sign of self-pity or bitterness in Mr Ashdown's comments, there is anger, over the invasion of privacy in the use of a



stolen document. This was the theme to which he kept returning. The issue here has become blurred by the issuing, and later lifting, of an injunction against all Fleet Street newspapers a week ago. Mr Ashdown recognises that this offered only a slim hope of keeping the matter secret, but it did give him time to alert his MPs and visit his Yeovil constituency on Monday. Thus he could prepare the disclosure on his own terms.

However, the Ashdown camp still believes that the injunction was fully justified, since what was being offered to the *News of the World* was a confidential statement stolen from his solicitor's safe. If the law cannot in practice prevent such documents becoming public — forced out by devices

such as "we are being gagged stories" — then there is nothing to stop the publication of other information obtained illegally, for instance through wire taps or tapes.

As an affected party who has, incidentally, opposed a privacy law, Mr Ashdown does not believe he can discuss his views in public, although close advisers such as Sir David Steel and Lord Holme of Cheltenham have sought to turn attention onto this issue. There is a lot of public and political sympathy for this line.

These specific and legitimate complaints have fuelled the existing feverish debate about the bias of the press, dirty tricks and smears which had already been developing after the singularly mundane revelations about Neil

Kinnock's talks with Soviet diplomats. All sides tend to exaggerate the political influence of the media, and although television is by far the most common source of news, the press still matters, since roughly three-quarters of the public also reads a daily paper.

Obviously the British press disproportionately supports the Tories. More than 70 per cent of papers sold are pro-Tory, compared with 50 per cent in 1950. But of course this masks big variations in the degree to which individual papers are partisan. Nevertheless, Labour has a fair grievance against some of the highly tendentious tabloid coverage of the past six weeks, matched in style, if not scale, by attacks on the Tories in the *Daily Mirror*.

Such bias may be wrong and often nauseating, but it probably has little effect on voters. Politicians often behave as if they take note of every word and headline. But papers are bought for many reasons other than their political stance. Most people read a paper roughly in line with their own position, but many do not. In 1987, some 31 per cent of Sun readers voted Labour, while 20 per cent of buyers of the *Daily Mirror* similarly ignored the paper's line and voted Tory.

Some readers are blissfully ignorant of their paper's political line. In 1987, 37 per cent of readers of *The Sun* did not realise it was pro-Tory. In general, the stridency of the tabloids merely reinforces existing opinions.

Academics such as Martin Harrop and William Miller believe the press has little direct influence on changes in voting behaviour when compared to the existing views of voters. The biggest impact is among those who usually pay scant attention to politics and who are therefore most susceptible to media influence. It is not surprising, perhaps, that the biggest shift to the Tories during the last election occurred among the relatively non-political Sun and *Daily Star* readers.

More important than what the press says during elections — when there is anyway the offsetting effect of carefully balanced television and radio coverage and the parties' own broadcasts — is the media's longer-term impact on opinions by the manner in which it sets the terms of the policy debate.

As I left the relative calm of Mr Ashdown's office yesterday, I noticed on television the endlessly repeated pictures of the real victims of the tabloid pressures: his wife and former secretary. However, away from the fevered atmosphere of Westminster and Fleet Street, the public seems unexcited by so-called scandals, smears or smears. People may eagerly read all about the Ashdown affair, but even think again about him, but when they come to vote, I doubt they will be much influenced by this week's tabloid excesses.

...and moreover ALAN COREN

On behalf of the five million Britons who are like me, I wish to apologise to the 55 million who are not. For they are on their own, this week. They will get no help from us. Whatever the depths of their distress or need, our eyes are blind and our ears deaf. Frankly, my dears, we do not give a damn. We are too busy confronting our own fears, facing situations head-on, and generally looking out for good old number one. Or, rather, good old numbers one to five million. And we have been strongly advised not to support others, for the very good reason that both the Sun and Mercury are adversely affected by Pluto.

Which brings me to an adverse aspect of astrology itself which I had not hitherto considered, probably because I had never considered astrology at all until this morning: when, thumbing through the chaos of the *Radio Times* in search of something else, I inadvertently fetched up against the face of Patric Walker, topping his horoscope column with the knowing smirk of one for whom fate holds no surprises. So I glanced at the Cancer entry, hoping for some such encouragement as "keep trying, you will find the programme information you are seeking any day now, this week's layout was done by a tall dark stranger who has now gone on a long sea voyage," but instead received only the advice adumbrated above. And I would have left it that, had it not

suddenly struck me that Patric's counsel, though apparently offered to me alone, had in fact been offered to that entire twelfth of the population born between June 22 and July 23. This week, five million people were going to confront their fears, face situations head-on, and ignore the pleas of others. It did not bear thinking about. All those hapless phobics suddenly attempting to pick up spiders, climb the Monument, travel by tube, stroke a Rottweil, cross a bridge, never mind the mass of the less manically fearful now doing everything from bursting in on their solicitor to see whether he'd been burgled lately to jamming Yelvis's switchboard with stammered enquiries about which way he thought Kazakhstan's ICBMs might be pointing because for those wishing to confront them, there is never any shortage of fears.

Not that this is any skin off my nose. Thanks to Pluto's adverse aspect, I am allowed not to give a fig for anyone else. So, just in case you're one of the five million Aquarians currently seeking help with intense personal problems, at least you know where not to come.

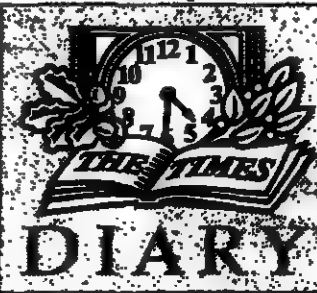
A past and present help

THE Vatican is considering the creation of a patron saint for AIDS sufferers. Jesuits in Britain are leading the call for St Aloysius Gonzaga to be officially designated as the protector of AIDS victims. St Aloysius, a Jesuit who died in Rome in 1591 at the age of 23, contracted the bubonic plague after carrying victims of the disease on his shoulders to a Jesuit hospital.

The pope has not yet pronounced on the matter, but the proposal has already divided Catholic opinion. The Rev Michael Campbell-Johnston, superior-general of the Jesuits in Britain, admits that the suggestion has caused division.

"AIDS is a serious disease and people who suffer from it need help," he says. "I think it is a very good idea. Aloysius personified piety, self-sacrifice and non-violence. His sanctity is outstanding. He would be a spiritual inspiration." Fr Johannes Gerhardt, who is secretary of the Jesuit Order of Rome, also backs the idea. "We have patron saints for every kind of group, so why not for those people with AIDS?" But Fr Gualberto Giacchi, who has written the Vatican biography of the saint, disagrees. "This would end up overshadowing some of the historical values in the life of this saint — the more universal values," he says.

The issue will be decided by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments in Rome, which, under the pope's direction, is responsible for naming patron saints. "If enough people with AIDS ask for St Aloysius as a patron saint, it may happen," says a Vatican spokesman.



Albert Reynolds may have lots of front when it comes to singing country & western songs in public, but ask him his age and he turns all coy. His daughter Leonie — as well as his parliamentary secretary, the Fianna Fail press officer and several reference books — have, until now, all suggested that Ireland's new leader was born on November 3, 1935. The party's press office insists that its information comes direct from the Taoiseach's own mouth. Reynolds's birth certificate was last night published in *Dublin's Evening Press*. There it is in black and white: November 3, 1937. Whoever said seven days was a long time in politics?

Return to sender

LORD SHAWCROSS was last night presented with a unique gift to mark his 90th birthday: a leather-bound volume of some of his letters published in *The Times*. The gift was presented to Shawcross, one of our most prolific correspondents, at a 200-strong banquet, attended by, among others, Lord Callaghan and Sir Geoffrey Howe. The meal was held in the premises of his employers — for whom he still puts in an eight-hour day — J.P. Morgan. The letters reflect the applica-

tion of a powerful mind and acerbic wit to a wide range of issues, from the continued prosecution of Nazi war criminals ("I am against it") to the wisdom of BBC producers ("there seems to be no reliable evidence that they possess any hot line to the deity"). Shawcross says that he has no intention of retiring from the bank. Nor from the page opposite, please.

Dickens and son?

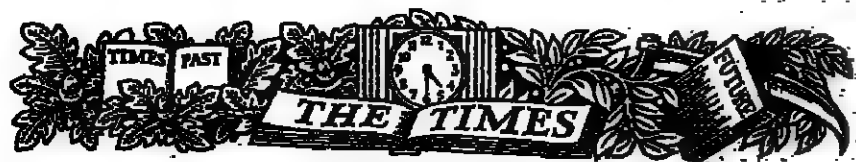
AFTER Paddy Ashdown, Charles Dickens. The annual dinner of the Dickens Fellowship at Simpsons in the Strand tonight will hear readings from *The Confessions of Charles Dickens*, in which the author owns up to an affair with the actress Ellen Ternan.

Alan Watts, the fellowship's respected president and Dickens scholar, has ghost-written the memoirs, recently published in

Great Expectations...

that the relationship had been consummated". Watts says he was distressed by his own findings. "There is strong evidence that there was a child. I can't defend Dickens's treatment of his wife, but I still love and honour him."

● The tabloids are leaving no stone unturned in their pursuit of the Paddy Ashdown story. A team of journalists even set up camp yesterday outside the Tenerife hotel of Alison Northcliffe, Ashdown's secretary between 1986 and 1990. Northcliffe had to telephone her local Lib Dem party in Torquay to find out why she had suddenly become the centre of such attention. What the reporters did not realise until they arrived, however, was that she was on her honeymoon.



THE RIGHT TO RENT

Not until last December did the government start to panic about the property market. House prices had been falling, in the South-East at least, since 1988. Only when former Conservative voters began to tell heartbreaking stories about losing jobs, houses, cars and all they stood up in, did ministers realise that the severely depressed housing market was becoming an electoral issue. Mortgage lenders' heads were banged together to produce a repossessions rescue plan and an eight-month stamp duty holiday was announced.

A Times survey today indicates that the rescue scheme may help as few as 5,000 out of a total of 80,000 facing repossession. And while the stamp duty holiday may lead to a cluster of sales before its expiry date in August, few experts believe that the 1 per cent saving will be enough to tempt a mass of buyers into the stagnant market. A larger fall in house prices has not managed to do so.

Does it really matter if house prices continue to fall? Politically, the property market crash could damage the Conservatives. The loss of the "feel-good factor" created by high house prices is continuing to hold back recovery in the economy. The impact has been most painful in Tory areas, hurting those lower middle-class voters who were important to Margaret Thatcher's electoral success. Attracted by her dream of a property-owning democracy, they bought houses (often from their council) whose value has now fallen, the interest payments on which many can no longer afford. Because the market is so sluggish, they find themselves unable to sell. And some of those who bought at the top of the boom now find their house is worth less than their mortgage.

For the economy, in the longer term, lower house prices are excellent. Britain's housing market, crucial to "labour market flexibility", has long been blighted by the inflexibility of home ownership. It is as illiquid as molasses. At the height of the boom in the 1980s, skilled workers could not move down south to fill shortages because they could not afford to live there. Now, they would be lucky to be able to sell at all.

Young people get sucked into home

ownership far earlier than they should. In Germany, the average age for taking out a first mortgage is 35. Until then, Germans live in rented apartments and can move from city to city as the market takes them. Young Britons, by contrast, take out their first mortgage in their mid-twenties. They are saddled with debt and stuck in one place.

At their peak, in 1990, interest payments on the typical new mortgage took up 32 per cent of average earnings. In the 1980s, Britons were relatively happy to be encumbered with large mortgages as soon as they were old enough to afford them. They feared that, if they failed to climb onto the housing ladder, they would have to make do with a lower rung later. Parity buying-set in. The more people bought, the higher prices rose, and the more imperative it became for anybody who could afford it to buy a house. Those who did were rewarded by a giddy increase in their (notional) wealth.

That unseemly rush into the property market prepared the ground for today's recession. Interest rates rose and duly punished industry and employment. It should be a government imperative to stop that boom/bust cycle.

House prices have still fallen less in real terms than they did in the mid-1970s (although then high inflation masked the effect). Those who have been caught by the collapse this time may hesitate before entering the market again. But while home ownership remains so heavily subsidised, Britons will continue to scrape together all their savings and lock them into their homes.

Politicians assume that there are still as many votes in increasing home ownership as there were in the 1980s. Yet the new homeowners who have discovered, painfully, that property investment is not a one-way bet, might now vote for a policy that put money into reviving the rented sector instead. The one-third of the population that already rents would welcome such a shift in subsidy too. No longer should mortgage interest tax relief be seen by government and Opposition as the political sacred cow that can never be killed for its meat.

CASE FOR THE PROSECUTION

The least good reason to welcome yesterday's appointment of Barbara Mills as Director of Public Prosecutions is that she is a woman. Her sex will doubtless please ministers hypersensitive to charges of male chauvinism. Career-minded women will be delighted at this confirmation that they are not disqualified from high office. But the choice owes nothing to such considerations. Mrs Mills is simply the best person for the job.

The Crown Prosecution Service thought that it already had the best on the sad day last October when Sir Allan Green, Mrs Mills's predecessor, was driven to resign. The best had not yet proved enough. The service was created in 1986 and the years since have not been easy. It has been beset by the usual problems that attend institutional reform: administrative confusion, stretched resources, poor employee morale and an excessive workload for senior management. Worse, the service has been haunted by the problem that began it.

The CPS came into being because of dissatisfaction with the role of the police. Before 1986, the police were both the investigating and the prosecuting authority. That authority inevitably saw its job as to clear up crime and convict its perpetrators. The methods by which this was achieved mattered less. Too often, the prosecution presented evidence that it knew, or should have known, to be faulty. Juries were browbeaten to convict. The creation of the CPS was meant to remove this compulsion.

It has since emerged that the compulsion was sometimes worse than could have been imagined. The Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six and the murder of PC Keith Blakelock have all cast doubt on police

procedures. This has rubbed off on the prosecutors who pressed their cases. Sir Allan showed a commendable willingness to abandon doubtful convictions. But he paid a price. Police suspicion of the CPS is rife. Working relations, essential to the system's smooth running, have sometimes hovered on the point of breakdown.

Here lies particular reason to welcome Mrs Mills's appointment. In her 18 months at the Serious Fraud Office, she proved adept at working alongside the police on complex investigations. She is no soft touch. Indeed critics of her tenure at the SFO more often accuse her of an over-readiness to prosecute than the reverse. Yet as counsel for Winston Silcott, she has first-hand knowledge of the hazards.

Her first task is to restore the morale of the Crown Prosecution Service. She must press the case, first espoused by Sir Allan, for her staff to be granted rights of audience in the Crown courts, breaking the monopoly of the Bar. Secondly, she must open up CPS decision-making. There may be a reason why the Crown seeks to jail doctors who put terminally ill patients out of their agony, or distraught women who fight back against their violent husbands, or men who choose to get their sexual kicks by submitting to mutilation by others. If so, the public should be told.

The criminal justice system is being investigated by Lord Runciman's Royal Commission. The right verdict for it to return on the charges of inadequacy against the CPS would be the Scottish one: "not proven". Mrs Mills's ambition should be to ensure that, by the time he reports, Lord Runciman returns a "not guilty" verdict instead.

FAULTY TOWERS

Demolition only 21 years after it was completed brings to an end an appropriately nasty, brutish and short life for one of London's least loved modern buildings, the departments of environment and transport in Marsham Street, Westminster. Michael Heseltine announced yesterday that he is to spend something like £200 million replacing the block. This is cheap at the price. Almost any replacement would be better than the slabs sticking three fat fingers 200 feet at the sky from the surrounding close-knit streets.

The paradox that has pacified the Treasury is that the replacement will be more cost-effective than this utilitarian "statement" of the Modern Movement in architecture. The environment department, supposedly guardian of Britain's finest architecture, was an exceptionally inefficient place to work in: eternally windswept, already falling to bits, dispiriting and badly interconnected, with the lifts that were its main arteries continually breaking down. Some 3,500 civil servants were herded into a repetitious grid of concrete boxes and identical corridors. A former environment secretary used to take visitors to the 19th storey to point out for them the best view of London — the only one which did not include the Marsham Street towers.

"Marsham Street" was erected in fits and starts throughout the Sixties, representing a variant on Modernism proudly labelled Brutalism by its progenitors. Other examples include the Hayward Gallery/Queen Elizabeth Hall complex on the South Bank and the Elephant and Castle in south London. If it is now open season to call in Bejerman's famous friendly bombs on such debased commercial and bureaucratic architecture, there are plenty more candidates for attack. Most date from the disastrous policy of

"point block" development in the 1960s and 1970s. Birmingham's Bull Ring is coming down. So should Manchester's Piccadilly development. In London, most offence was caused by isolated steel, glass and concrete blocks round the parks of the West End: the Hilton and Royal Lancaster hotels, the Euston tower near Regent's Park and the Royal Free Hospital by Hampstead Heath. New Zealand House lowers over St James's and Centre Point over Soho. Many of these buildings were built for the government, or subsidised with public-sector grants or "planning gain" deals. The passion for high-rise building, always inefficient in the use of space, was largely the result of delusions of grandeur by developers and civil servants.

Urban space can be more efficiently, more sensitively and more attractively exploited by intensive, low building. This lesson has been an expensive one. London is not the city for monumental redevelopment, like Paris and the centre of Washington. Its character is higgledy-piggledy, with medieval street plans, gardens and congeries of old villages. Its architecture needs to respect the surroundings and the needs of those who are going to use it.

Downstream, redevelopment is hoped to shift the centre of gravity of London. The great pyramid-topped tower of Canary Wharf can be seen from all quarters, and as far away as Stansted. It is too big, possibly too big for its own commercial good, but at least few will ever see it from close to. Its day for demolition may be far off, but from a river boat, up the old gateway to London, much of the new building in Docklands is exciting and respects its setting. The Age of Brutalism is dead. It meets its end symbolically in the fall of the faulty towers of Marsham Street.

Party lines on BBC funding

From Lord Briggs and others

Sir, With the approach of a general election, we regard it as vital for the leaders of the three main parties to make clear their attitudes to the funding of the BBC. The BBC's charter is up for renewal in 1996; it is therefore the Parliament that is about to be elected that will almost certainly decide this issue.

For most of its history, the BBC has been seen as a part of the social fabric of Britain. In fulfilling its brief to educate, inform and entertain, the BBC has performed a wide range of valuable services to the nation. It has encouraged talented writers, actors, musicians and all those involved in the craft of film-making. Its education programmes have helped to shape the outlook of generations of young people. It has provided independent observation of the life of the nation and the world.

All around the world, the BBC is synonymous with high-quality programmes and first-class production values.

Today the BBC is in retreat. The preoccupation with cutbacks and the market economy has made a publicly funded body unfashionable. The consequent retrenchment is involving wholesale cuts in programme budgets and in the BBC's regional service. The range and diversity of the BBC's output is at serious risk.

Few large organisations are perfect, and some of the efficiencies being put into practice will give the viewer better value for money. But now is the time to stop the cuts and to start supporting a valuable national asset.

We believe that a future government which cares about education, diversity and the maintenance of our national culture will want to reinforce and invest in the BBC.

We therefore urge the three party leaders to make a commitment to the future of the BBC, and to state in their election manifestos that they will continue to support the licence fee and allow it to rise at least in line with inflation.

Yours etc,
ASA BRIGGS,
BRENDAN FOSTER,
GEORGE HARRISON,
RICHARD HOGGART,
TERRY JONES,
CAMERON MACKINTOSH,
IRIS MURDOCH,
MICHAEL PALIN,
DAVID FLOWRIGHT,
ANTHONY SAMSON,
ROY STRONG.

The Campaign for Quality Television
PO Box 321,
Manchester M60 3AA,
February 5.

On the right rails

From Mr J. D. A. Evans

Sir, Mr Win of the British Road Federation says (letter, January 31) that he understands that 90 per cent of the population never travel on a train. Our understanding based on independent market research, is that just under half the population use the railways at some time.

It is not surprising that we find his assessment of the railway industry's needs and achievements to be similarly wide of the mark.

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY EVANS
(Director of Public Affairs),
British Railways Board,
Euston House, 24 Eversholt Street,
PO Box 100, NW1,
January 31.

Church 'superiority'

From the Bishop of Brentwood

Sir, I read with interest the article by Derek Jennings (January 27) concerning the "effortless superiority" of the Anglican Church towards other Christian churches. There is some truth in this.

However, as Roman Catholics we need to examine our own conscience. For centuries, and even on occasions since Vatican II, we have implied, if not expressed, an "ecclesiastical superiority" towards other churches, which must often have made them feel like second-class citizens.

Sadly, some may be inclined to see the recent Vatican response to the first Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, wrongly or rightly, as a further sign of this.

Yours faithfully,
THOMAS McMAHON,
Bishop of Brentwood,
Ingatstone, Essex,
January 31.

The right to die

From Mr Ludovic Kennedy

Sir, I see that Bernard Levin has been writing tosh again about euthanasia ("Whose death is it anyway?", February 3): contemptible tosh, too.

Derek Humphry's wife, Jean, having watched her mother take five years to die in agony from cancer, developed the disease herself at 40. It spread rapidly to her bones, liver, kidneys. Her pain was not wholly alleviated by analgesics and not wanting to die as her mother had done, she begged her husband to obtain some powerful drug that she could take when she could bear her condition no longer. He did this with the help of a Harley Street friend, and on Easter Saturday, 1975, she took it.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Unpaid bills and legal drawbacks

From the Under Secretary of State for Employment

Sir, I can well understand the frustration expressed by Mr Alistair Sampson (letter, February 5) about the delayed payment of bills and the damage that this causes to small firms.

Though the arguments for legislation imposing statutory interest on overdue bills may appear cogent and powerful, there is little evidence that a legislative approach would work in practice. Most organisations representing small firms recognise the practical difficulties in framing an effective law and share the government's view that its impact would be, at best, minimal and that it could actually damage the small firms sector. Indeed, only on Tuesday, the Credit Protection Association warned of the dangers of trying to impose statutory interest on overdue bills.

The answer to delayed payment is for industry to change its own payment practices and I can reassure Mr Sampson that the government is actively encouraging this process. For example, this department has recently published a detailed guide to prompt payment, "Making the Cash Flow", and I have sought the personal commitment of the chairmen of Britain's top 100 companies to the principle of prompt payment.

I also recognise that the public sector should set an example and a survey of the payment record of government departments is presently being undertaken.

The eradication of late payment requires a fundamental change in business culture and neither the government, nor many other organisations, believe legislation would achieve that change.

Yours faithfully,
ERIC FORTH,
Department of Employment,
Caxton House,
Tothill Street, SW1,
February 5.

From Mr Nicholas Goulding

Sir, Mr Sampson rightly draws attention to the need for a legislative solution to late payment of commercial debt which is driving so many companies to the wall and acting as a drag on the whole economy.

The government, together with the CBI, is still wedded to voluntary codes as the solution, despite the fact that such codes have failed to make any impact in the past. Without legal sanction such codes will be observed by those who already honour their commitments and abused by those who do not.

Sunday trading

From the Chairman of OPEN

Sir, Councillor David Weeks proposes that the rateable values of shops which open on Sundays should be increased to reflect their opportunities for profit (report, January 27). It is not clear from your report whether his proposal would apply only to stores which cannot open on Sundays, but would like to do so, or would embrace small convenience stores which are already entitled to open on Sundays for the sale of most of their goods.

My organisation represents 10,000 small local food shops and convenience stores. They have already suffered from the recession, high interest rates, the decline of the small store sector, the uniform business rate and now from the competition on Sundays from the supermarkets. Increased rates could be the final straw for our sector which has already seen the number of small stores decline from around 145,000 40 years ago to 38,000 today.

Higher rates would be catastrophic for us, for the 50,000 people whom we employ and for the millions of people, especially working mothers, the elderly, the disabled and those without transport who

depend upon our stores. If Councillor Weeks's plan is being considered by ministers, I trust that they will spare a thought for us.

Why should we pay for the sins of those supermarkets which seek to squeeze extra profits at the expense of the neighbourhood shop?

Yours faithfully,
MORTON MIDDLEDITCH,
Chairman,
OPEN (Outlets Providing for Everyday Needs),
67-69 Whitfield Street, W1,
January 30.

From Councillor David Weeks
Sir, The letter from Mr Terry Clemens (January 30) raises undue concern about the potential impact of my proposal on small businesses. The beauty of a supplemental Sunday business rate is that it can be graded according to the size of the retailer. Large companies who open on Sundays place a far higher demand on council services than corner stores. A progressive rate would reflect this.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID WEEKS,
PO Box 240,
Westminster City Hall,
64 Victoria Street, SW1,
February 5.

Business letters, page 23

Tricia Howard's right to privacy

From Mr Des Wilson

Sir, I believe that you were inadvertently harsh when you stated of Ms Tricia Howard, in your leading article today, that "the right to privacy of the lady in the case, which at first was surely close to total, was also surrendered by her when she summoned reporters and photographers" for a photocall.

The fact is that Ms Howard has been hounded for days. Her family and friends were being harassed. And it was even more likely to be the case that her life would be made a greater misery from now on until the tabloids had drained every bit of blood from the story.

She reluctantly took the view, having taken her lawyer's advice, and also our advice, that it would be best — to put it bluntly — to let the dogs have their day.

"Surrendering" her privacy was done with the utmost reluctance, but I believe was as sensible a course as it was courageous.

Incidentally, Ms Howard has turned down considerable sums of money and acted with remarkable integrity and that, too, should be a matter of record.

Yours,
DES WILSON
(General election campaign director),
Liberal Democrats,
4 Cowley Street, SW1,
February 6.

Fixed fees for lawyers

From Mr Lloyd M. Groves

Sir, "Fixed fees" for lawyers, which really mean "smaller fees", may well find favour with the public and politicians alike, but I urge your readers to stop and think carefully before jumping in the hue and cry.

The Lord Chancellor is suggesting that no matter how long or complex a case in a magistrate's court conducted under legal aid, the fee should nearly always be a fixed one. No reward shall be given irrespective of the length of time such a case may take, no matter how demanding a case may be and ignoring any special effort given when it is needed.

Magistrates courts are places not only for robbers and villains but the likes of us all, who perhaps due to misfortune, mistake or error of judgment can so easily find ourselves in the dock. If it is you, Mr or Mrs Average, before the court I urge you to ask yourself how you would feel if dealt with, at a time when, most vulnerable, by a lawyer who could only give you a limited time within the scope of the fixed fee to be allowed.

It may sound true but every case that comes before the courts is different. To ascertain those differences much care and attention must be given. Criminal legal-aid work is demanding, stressful and often carried out at unsociable hours. If the work is not done properly because the fees are inadequate, we shall have more Birmingham sixes, Guildford fours and Tottenham threes. What then the cost? The price is our liberty.

Yours faithfully,
LLOYD GROVES,
West London Law Society,
37 Harley Street, W1,
February 4.

Patient's charter

From Ms Jane Lee

Sir, If the patient's charter is to be an example of the government's pledge to improve standards of service, it is vital that users of the National Health Service are aware of the exact wording in each assurance. I would like to give just two examples:

1. The right to be "referred to a second opinion if you and your GP agree this is desirable". Fund-holding GPs work to a tight budget and, no matter how willing, may be unable to meet the cost of further consultation fees. Under such circumstances, perhaps the only "right" for the patient is to change GP.

2. The right to "have access to your health records". Yes, but only those which were written since last November and those which would not cause "undue concern to the patient". The added, again unmentioned, condition is that each health authority has the right to charge up to £10 for such access.

Rather than spend nearly £2 million on a somewhat meaningless patient's charter, the government should have invested this much-needed money in health services.

Yours sincerely,
JANE LEE (Co-ordinator),
Hospital Alert,
51 Grove Road,
Hounslow, Middlesex,
January 28.

Favoured occupations

From Mr W. J. Schafer

Sir, I was interested to read that train drivers are no longer held in esteem by the public (report, February 5), as my own profession has met with a similar fate in recent years.

But which occupations are so honoured?

Yours faithfully,
W. J. SCHAFER
(Chartered architect),
56 Belvedere Road,
Ashton-in-Makerfield,
Wigan, Greater Manchester,
February 5.

this country when it is freely available at £12.95 (the Attorney General having realised the futility of banning a book in England which is not banned in Scotland).

Mr Levin does not seem to have asked himself why the book has been such a success in the United States or why branches of the World Right to Die Federation now exist in more than 40 countries. It is because more and more people dread the prospect of a life artificially and miserably prolonged by medical science beyond its natural term, and seek some means of ending it. At present this is denied them.

Yours etc,
LUDOVIC KENNEDY,
Ashdown Avenue,
Wiltshire,
February 3.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

OBITUARIES

JOHN PARRY

John Hywel Parry, OBE, former director general of the Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation and the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation, died on February 2 aged 78. He was born on June 1, 1913.

JOHN Parry came of that generation of broadcasters who discovered and developed ways in which the medium was to be used. He almost single-handedly launched the process in central Africa, starting as the first secretary to the Southern Rhodesia Post Office Broadcasting Service and eventually becoming director general of the Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation amid all the turmoil of Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965.

John Hywel Parry was the son of a Welsh general practitioner and was born in Pontycymmer in South Wales. From an early age he had the Welshman's way with words and was already writing poetry when he went up to Cambridge as a scholar to read history at Gonville and Caius. A serious asthma sufferer, he took himself to South Africa in search of a better climate as soon as he graduated.

He joined the staff of the Johannesburg Daily Express as a leader writer and then became the paper's features editor and critic of music and theatre. He was already attracted to broadcasting and took every opportunity of writing, narrating and presenting programmes for the fledgling South African Broadcasting Corporation. He acted in semi-professional theatre companies as well as on radio.

In 1941 he moved to the self-governing colony of Southern Rhodesia to become secretary of the new broadcasting service and run its programming. He was appointed controller of broadcasting and then, on the formation of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1953, he was made controller of the English service of the Federal Broadcasting Corporation. He was appointed OBE in 1952.

In the tumultuous breakup of the Federation in 1963, Parry was invited to take over the running of the Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation as its first director general. The RBC established highly competent television and radio services but the political situation in the country was becoming increasingly difficult with the inexorable move towards UDI. In his position as director general he had to fight to retain the professional standards of his broadcasting service against the extreme white nationalism of the Rhodesia Front.

Parry's role was further complicated by the fact that more than 90 per cent of the

population was black and the RBC also broadcast services in Shona and Ndebele, the major languages of that population. He stayed in office during the immediate aftermath of UDI in November 1965 but the divergence between his views and those of the Smith regime meant that he was compulsorily retired within a few months.

The following year he took up the more congenial position, for him, of director general of the broadcasting corporation of the independent black state of Malawi. There he was still involved in the controversies over the illegal state of Rhodesia and its effect on its former federal neighbours — matters which dominated Commonwealth (and frequently British) politics for so many years. In Malawi he had to encompass the vanities of a president-for-life who required that every speech he made be carried in full in broadcasts to the nation — and Dr Banda liked long speeches — but at least he was helping a developing nation communicate with its own people.

He retired in 1970, and returned to Rhodesia, which was still locked in its obdurate independence against the rest of the world and its own black population. He modestly accepted the job within the Ministry of Education of expanding audio-visual techniques for teaching Africans.

Throughout the time he was running broadcasting stations and corporations he continued to write, direct and often perform for the medium. Some of his poems were published and many of his short stories, plays and drama adaptations were broadcast. He won the Prix de Barcelona for the best original radio play, which he wrote and produced himself in 1961.

He was a passionate sportsman and enjoyed nothing more than acting as commentator, at home and on tour, of cricket games and rugby matches, including those at Test level.

Fourteen years ago, he returned with his wife, Evelyn, to England, where his three daughters now live. All three followed him into radio or television. His eldest daughter, Jane, worked for the BBC and is dance critic of *The Observer* (ballet was yet another of his catholic enthusiasms); Lynden is senior vice-president, television, ITC Entertainment Group; and Clare is assistant news editor of Sky News.

Living in Cambridge, he was able to enjoy watching and discussing cricket at Fenner's, as well as much-prized trips to Lords and Cardiff Arms Park. He continued his interest in writing by running a creative writers' discussion group until his final illness.



BISHOP GERALD MAHON

Bishop Gerald Mahon, auxiliary bishop in Westminster and former missionary, died of cancer on January 29 aged 69. He was born in Fulham, London, on May 4, 1922.



AS SUPERIOR General of the Mill Hill Missionaries from 1963 to 1970, Bishop Gerald Mahon was one of the last of Britain's bishops to have been a full voting member throughout the Second Vatican Council. He attended three sessions of the council and addressed it twice in support of a secretariat for the problems of world poverty. Later he was appointed a consultant to the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace (1967-72). In 1970 he was consecrated auxiliary bishop of Westminster by Cardinal Heenan and had special responsibility for the boroughs of west London. For eight years from 1955 he had been a missionary in the diocese of Kisumu in Kenya.

Gerald Mahon was in the best sense a "worldly" priest, who was never happier than when out in the pastoral field. He was also a man of great intellectual curiosity and unassuming scholarship. His conversation, ranging from recollections of Leavis lecturing at Cambridge (whom he could mimic brilliantly) to the recent insights he was gaining into the character of the Chinese, garnered from visits to China and a brave effort to learn the language, or the qualities of a particular wine. He was a generous host at his modest episcopal residence in London and always a good companion.

He will also be remembered as that rare person, an excellent chairman of meetings and organiser of committees, with a shrewd insight into people's strengths and

weaknesses. His calmness and resolution — though he was far from possessing a blind and unquestioning faith — sprang from a deep spirituality and acceptance of the imperfections of the Roman Catholic Church which he served with loyalty and compassion.

His experience as a missionary priest — he retained a profound love for African people — made him focus less on the interior perplexities of Catholicism than on what Catholic faith in the providence of God could offer to the world. From this sprang his commitment to ecumenism, to seeking understanding with non-Catholics, with Jewish believers and with people of diverse cultures and beliefs. Gerald Mahon's career derived from, and deepened his concern for, the poor of the world and his hatred of injustice, which he fought not as a rebel but within the guidelines of the church.

Gerald Thomas Mahon was the son of George E. Mahon, who lectured at St Mary's College of Education, housed in Horace Walpole's remarkable Gothic fantasia at Strawberry Hill, Middles-

Cardinal Vaughan School, Kensington, and St Joseph's College, Mill Hill — headquarters of the St Joseph's Society for Foreign Missions (Mill Hill Fathers) of which he was eventually to become the superior general. He was ordained priest in 1946.

From 1950 till 1955 he taught in the college of the Mill Hill fathers at Freshfield and was then appointed to the diocese of Kisumu, Kenya, where he taught in, and was later Rector of, St Peter's Seminary, Kakamega. From 1971 to 1976 Mahon was a consultant to the Vatican's Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples and from 1980 was a member of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians. He was chairman of the National Committee for Justice and Peace (1975-80) and was also a member of the Vatican International Liaison Committee with World Jewry. He was chairman of the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies, a member of the New Bearings Committee and a member of the governing body of the Linacre Centre. He was also chairman of the Committee for Catholic/Jewish Relations, chairman of the Committee for Overseas Missions and president of the National Missionary Council.

"Gerry" Mahon's private life — his many close friendships and staunch fondness for the family which he had left to become a priest — sustained him during difficult years when the old orthodoxies of the Catholic Church were increasingly under strain. He could have been a scholar or indeed a rather successful businessman, and it was the latter potential which shaped his career as a priest and bishop.

REAR-ADMIRAL JOHN HOWSON

Rear-Admiral John Howson, CB, DSC, a former deputy C-in-C Allied Forces Northern Europe, died on January 24 aged 83. He was born on August 30, 1908.



IN JUNE 1944 Rommel complained bitterly to Hitler that he could not deploy his forces as he wished because of the accurate shelling of the Royal Navy. Jack Howson could not have been paid a finer compliment. As gunnery officer in the battleship *Nelson* he had already been mentioned in dispatches for his role during the bombardment of the beaches in Sicily and Italy during the allied invasion.

Now in those crucial days which followed D-Day *Nelson's* 16-inch guns once more volleys and thundered as, along with other warships in the channel, she pounded the northern French ports and their hinterland in support of the advancing allied troops. The accuracy of the guns which so dismayed Erwin Rommel was recognised with the award of the DSC to Howson.

He came from a family whose seafaring tradition stretched back in one form or another for three centuries. His grandfather had captained a windjammer in the last century while his father was a marine engineer on the Clyde. An only child, Jack Howson went to Kelvinian Academy in Glasgow, thence to Dartmouth at the age of 13 in 1921. Ten years later he entered the spartan environment of HMS *Excellent*, the Navy's famous old gunnery school on Whale Island.

He served in the carrier *Furious* before the war, then transferred to the cruiser *Newcastle*. From *Newcastle* he was posted to *Nelson* — a challenging appointment for a young gunnery officer. Howson went to Singapore after the war, first as gunnery officer of the Pacific

Fleet then on the staff of the C-in-C Far East. He was then brought back to home waters as executive officer of the cruiser *Superb* before returning east, this time to Hong Kong, in command of HMS *Tamar*, the naval base.

Between 1955 and 1958 he served at Shap in France as a British naval representative, working closely under the direction of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Louis Mountbatten. He became a friend and great admirer of Mountbatten and was deeply affected by Mountbatten's murder by the IRA more than 20 years later.

While chief-of-staff to the C-in-C, Plymouth, between 1958 and 1961 he wrote his name into Royal Navy folklore by organising a Nato presentation which was sung to the accompaniment of tunes from *The Mikado*. His American allies

were said to have looked on in wide-eyed amazement. He also endeared himself to all opponents of red tape by replying in rhyming couplets to one especially bureaucratic letter from Whitehall.

Howson's last appointment was in Norway as naval deputy to the C-in-C allied forces in Northern Europe. He retired in 1964 and in the same year joined the British Productivity Council as its north midlands regional officer. He retired for the second time in 1971 and devoted his time to charitable work, especially for cancer relief.

Jack Howson was in many ways an archetypal naval officer and Scot. Blunt, honest and straight-talking, he was full of old fashioned integrity and the work ethic. A sailor whom he once had to put in jail later paid him a tribute by describing him as the straightest man he had ever known. He always took to sea with him the Bible and Shakespeare and could quote copious passages from the latter.

Yet his life was not without its disappointments. The biggest came in the 1950s when Howson was told that he was being placed on the so-called "dry list", which ruled out his chances of high command at sea. The division of naval officers between the "wet" and "dry" lists — which reflected the steady contraction of the fleet — was always a source of great chagrin for those who found themselves confined in future to dry land.

He was also greatly distressed by the steady erosion of the Merchant Navy. He was not alone among officers of the Royal Navy in lamenting the decline of the merchant fleet which he saw as not only a disaster for British commerce but also as a source of concern for the country's security.

Howson is survived by his wife and by one son and a daughter.

Romero Tomic

ROMERO Radomiro Tomic, who was defeated in presidential elections in Chile by Salvador Allende in 1970, has died in Santiago aged 77.

Allende won the election with 36 per cent of the votes compared with Alessandri's 35 per cent and Tomic's 28. With none of them obtaining more than 50 per cent, the run-off between the top two candidates went to the Chilean congress which elected

Allende who, three years later, was overthrown and killed in a military coup. Tomic, a founding member of Chile's Christian Democratic party in 1955, was accused by some of having paved the way for Allende's victory by depriving the third, centrist, candidate, Jorge Alessandri, of votes.

The Christian Democratic party was suspended by the post-coup junta but Tomic recently served as ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva.

University news

former director of product engineering, Jaguar Cars, from January.

Liverpool

Professorial appointments
Roy Chester to the chair of oceanography,
Robert H. Mays to the Bulley chair of applied plant biology and the directorship of the University Botanic Gardens.

Andrew R. Mays to the chair of psychology.
David Molyneux to be the first director of the School of Tropical Medicine and also professor of tropical health sciences.

John Scott to the Louis Cohen chair of oral diseases.
Elizabeth A. Slater to the chair of archaeology.
The following have received the title of professor: Paul S. L. Booth, reader in the department of physics; Christopher T. Allmand, lecturer in the department of

history; Julian M. Crampton, Wellcome senior research fellow in basic biomedical sciences in the department of medical entomology; John Garthwaite, reader in the department of physiology; Michael W. Service, reader in the department of medical entomology.

Essex
Professor Ron Johnston, pro-vice-chancellor of Sheffield University, is to be the next vice-chancellor of Essex University. It was announced yesterday.

He was chosen from 170 candidates and will take over his new post in the summer when Professor Martin Harris moves to Manchester University. Professor Johnston specialises in geography and has published extensively in the field. He is past president of the Institute of British Geographers.

APPRECIATIONS

Alec Grant

I WAS a fellow member with Alec Grant (obituary, February 5) of the GLC and when it became fully effective in 1965 and he was chairman of the licensing committee I was his vice-chairman. Matters were pretty different then — smoking was permitted in cinemas and there were special provisions regarding film censorship in London. These are just two areas where we initiated changes under his cap-

ble leadership and invariably he played a useful if relatively quiet role in the Labour group.

Many years later, following his appointment as a Queen's Bench Master, I, as a member of a firm of solicitors, had many cases receiving his consideration and I am able to confirm all you write of him. Although very meticulous, his detailed knowledge and courteous approach resulted in his being well respected by all who came before him.

Robin Thompson

Sir Alasdair Steedman

I HAD the joy and privilege of working together with Alasdair Steedman (obituary, January 6) when he was Comptroller of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund and I was chairman of the Benevolent Fund of the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators. Over a number of years we

dealt with deserving cases of mutual concern to our funds in the closest harmony and in every instance Alasdair brought to our deliberations a unique combination of wisdom, judgment and kindness. We became warm family friends and his stoicism, patience and determination during his last illness was a measure of the man. He will be much missed.

David Proudlove

Basil Handford

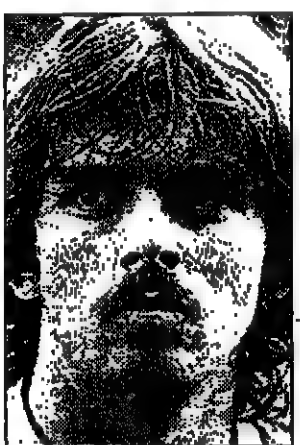
AS ONE who was lucky enough to be taught by Basil Handford (obituary, December 12) at Lancing more than 60 years ago, may I add my own tribute to his inspiring direction of our classical studies. Under his tutelage we did so much more than translate

Greek unscanned or compose Latin elegiacs: he opened our eyes to the wider world of history, literature, philosophy and politics, and my debt to him is profound. I am glad he lived to receive my recently published anthology of classical verse translations, and to read its grateful dedication to him.

Peter Hadley

ALAN DAVIES

Alan Davies, the Wales and Swansea footballer, was found dead in his car aged 30. He was born on December 5, 1961.



OUTSIDE Manchester, few had heard of the young winger or midfielder player Alan Davies when he was drafted into the Manchester United line-up for the 1983 Cup Final in place of the injured Steve Coppell. Davies, a clever dribbler and good crosser of the ball, had joined United, his local club, as an apprentice, making his debut at the end of the 1981-82 season.

A year and three more league appearances later he was suddenly thrust into prominence in United's Cup victory over Brighton. After a 2-2 draw Davies supplied the passes for United's first two goals in their 4-1 win in the replay, and a star, it seemed, was born.

Within the month he had won the first of 11 international caps against Northern Ireland and a second against Brazil. Sadly, instead of being the springboard for a fine career, that month was to be his high point.

A broken ankle meant that he was not fit at the start of the following season. That injury may have been crucial for his confidence and his future. Although he fought his way back, he played only three more games for United, the signing of Gordon

Strachan leaving no space for him, and he joined Newcastle, then in the first division.

He played 20 times for them but he was once again hampered by a leg injury and failed to establish himself. After loan spells at Charlton and Carlisle, he linked up with his international manager, Terry Yorath, at Swansea.

Yorath had more faith in him than he perhaps had in himself and when the manager moved to Bradford, he paid Swansea £135,000 for Davies. Both were subsequently to make the return journey, Davies rejoining the Welsh club in 1990. In all he made nearly 200 League appearances.

He leaves a widow and one daughter.

FEB 7 ON THIS DAY 1952

King George VI died on February 6, early in the morning, the news too late for that day's national papers.

Elsewhere in this leading article the author, Desmond Morris, a staff writer whose specialist subjects were monarchy and the constitution, referred to the young Queen's marriage "of affection to a Prince possessing every brilliant quality that can be a support to her throne."

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

While the banners sink to half-mast for King George VI the heralds with antique pomp proclaim the titles of Elizabeth II. As the peoples of all the British nations stretch out their hands across the oceans in sympathy for the bereaved daughter, they also render their homage to their Queen, standing ready in their loyal millions to support her as she takes upon her shoulders the heavy burden of representative monarchy, from which there will be no relief while she lives.

They know her and trust her as no Queen of England has been known and trusted at the outset of her reign. That she was not born in the direct line of succession, and that in nursery days her parents deliberately excluded influences which might set her apart from other children of high rank but private station, are facts all in her favour in these days, when monarchy no longer stands aloof from its subjects.

When history comes to be written it may be held not the least of the debts this country owes to the Queen Consort Elizabeth that she maintained personal oversight in every detail of the education of the Heiress Presumptive. It was not a bookish education, nor one that followed any of the "advanced" experimental theories of the day, but it was

calculated to keep the Princess's mind receptive, her interests wide and sensitive, her appreciation of nature and the sun lively, and above all her heart simple and open to heart things.

At the tender age of 14 it was inevitable that the Heiress should have been kept in more than usual seclusion during the perilous years of the Battle of Britain and the continuing threat of invasion, but young as she was she showed the true instinct of royalty when she insisted before the war ended, even against her father's first decision, upon sharing the experience of her contemporaries by putting on the uniform and undergoing the training of one of the women's services. When victory came she threw herself with diligence and high spirits into a double task: to assist her parents by sharing with them the multifarious and exhausting ceremonial duties of their station, and at the same time to identify herself in every way with the characteristics of her own generation, whether in their work or in their play.

Within the British Isles the Queen has missed no opportunity of moving widely among all classes. They know what manner of woman she is. They know that she has inherited from her father his directness and sincerity, his courage and devotion to duty, from her mother her easy manners, breadth of sympathy and warmth of heart, her gaiety which is tempered by a serene dignity native to the Queen herself.

She comes to her lofty place in an hour full of anxiety, peril, and the prospect of laborious years; but for herself she can bring to the contemplation of the tasks ahead the confidence and resilience of youth. She is of the same age at her accession as that other Queen 400 years ago, whose shining name she bears; and we may well remember that Elizabeth I in 1558 looked out upon, and afterwards triumphed over, as menacing a world as confronts her successor today.

Church news

Clergy appointments

The Rev John P. Aick, Curate, St Andrew, Cleveley to be Vicar, Appleby Bridge All Saints, a newly created benefice (Barnes).
The Rev J. Stephen Barks, Rector, Spaulson & Gouthorpe, Loughborough and Curate to be Vicar, Westwood Church and Wells.
The Rev Clive C. Bawden, Rector designate, Chatham St Mary to be also Secretary in the Diocesan Board of Mission (Canterbury).
The Rev Alan J. Burgess, Curate, Glenhills to be Vicar, Donnington and Merton (Salisbury).
The Rev Alan C. Carr, Curate, Rushington to be Vicar, Highgrove and West Hoxby (Chichester).
The Rev David Carr, Vicar, St Mary's, Hillingdon, Hatherly (Salisbury) to be Vicar, Burnham & Wycombe (Barnes).
The Rev Michael R. Cleveland, Curate, Rushbury Team Ministry (Salisbury) to be Vicar, St Mary's, Accrington (Blackburn) to be Vicar, St Cecilia's, Farnham (Salisbury).
The Rev Stephen Donald, Curate, Arlesey to be Vicar, Kendry (Sheffield).
The Rev Paul Dunn, Curate, St Mary & St Matthias and St John, Richmond to be Team Vicar, Wimbledon Team

Ministry, with special responsibility for St Matthew's, and shared responsibility for St John's (Southwark).
The Rev Michael Dymock, Vicar, St Nicholas, Plumstead (Southwark) to be Vicar, St Mary the Virgin, Denham St Mary Magdalene and Wotton, St Martin (Canterbury).
The Rev Joe Edwards, Rector, Asfordby All Saints to be Rector, North Kilworth with South Kilworth and Alton (Leicester).
The Rev Robert A. Fitzharris, Assistant Curate, St Leonard, Dinnington to be Vicar, St Peter's, Doncaster (Sheffield).
The Rev Alan Graham, Vicar, Lyndhurst to be Priest-in-Charge, Over Wallop and Nether Wallop (Winchester).
The Rev Anthony W. Johnson, Curate, Lutterworth St Mary to be Vicar, Coningshoe W. Folton (Salisbury).
The Rev Malcolm S. Johnson, Priest-in-Charge, Peshawar St John & St Andrew to be Vicar, Peshawar St John & St Andrew, a newly created benefice (Somerset).
The Rev John Marshall-Drans, non-resident Minister, Rugby Team Ministry to be Rector, Trowell St Peter (Leicester).
The Rev Alan Oates, Team Vicar, Jarrold St Mary to be Priest-in-Charge, Stoughton (Durham).
The Rev David J. A. Smith, Assistant Curate, St John, Perry Barr to be Priest-in-Charge, St Luke, Kingstanding to be Vicar, St Andrew's, Edgbaston (Birmingham).
The Rev Canon Michael Wright, Vicar,

Resignations and retirements

The Rev Canon Leslie F. Chadd, Vicar, St Peter and St Paul, Farnham (Portsmouth) to retire as from 31 January.
The Rev Eric C. Clavens, Vicar, St Columba, Croydon (Sheffield) to retire as from 31 May.
The Rev Jeffrey Prosser, Vicar, Christ Church, York (Sheffield) to retire as from 16 May.
The Rev Giles A. Hunt, Vicar, Preston-on-Warham (Canterbury) to retire as from 31 May.
The Rev Nicholas P. Kline, Vicar, Lynnhack (Durham) to resign as from 31 May.
The Rev Bernard F. Moles, Vicar, St John's, Dorchester (Southwark) to retire as from 31 May.
The Rev John W. Nichols, Team Vicar, Bromley and District Team Ministry (Canterbury) to retire as from 10 June.
The Rev Thomas O. Simpson, Vicar, Chappell (Durham) to retire as from 30 April.
The Rev John W. A. Woods, Rector, Barnburgh & Maltby (Sheffield) to retire.
The Rev Canon Michael Wright, Vicar,

Church in Wales

Diocese of Llandaff
The Rev Peter Bailey, Vicar of St John's, The Vale of Glamorgan to be Rural Dean of Neath.
The Rev Canon Michael Wright, Vicar,

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Abductor sends letter of apology

Continued from page 1

have an accomplice, but I am keeping an open mind."

The letter received in Birmingham was in an envelope with a typed label with the address "West Midlands Police, Birmingham, West Midlands." Mr Cook said that copies to Mrs Dart in Leeds and to Yorkshire Television were being examined by forensic scientists. Others had been posted to *The Sun*, *News of the World* and BBC Television and he appealed to those organisations to pass them to the police unopened.

The letter sent to Mrs Dart was intercepted by a colleague. It was disclosed last night. Harvey Atkin, aged 60, Miss Dart's grandfather, said that the letter had been posted from Sheffield to Leeds Polytechnic, where Mrs Dart works as a secretary. It had been intercepted by a member of staff, who handed it to police.

Mr Cook said that, during the investigation of Miss Dart's murder, West Yorkshire police had received up to nine letters from her abductor. In one, he had expressed remorse over her death, but others had taunted the police and referred to playing a game with them.

Mr Cook said yesterday: "There is no boasting or taunting of the police in this letter. The tone is one of regret and contrition. I remain cautiously optimistic about our enquiries."

The postmark on the letters has intensified the "Yorkshire connection" in the Slater kidnapping. The mysterious "Bob Southwell" who kidnapped her had given a false address in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, and had instructed the ransom to be left at a disused railway bridge near Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

ALL BOX NO. REPLIES SHOULD BE SENT TO: BOX NO. 484, P.O. BOX 484, WIMBORNE STREET, WAPPING, LONDON, E1 9QD.



Westminster eyesore: within two years the wrecking crews will remove the environment department's hated block in Marsham Street

82% think Ashdown should stay in office

Continued from page 1

a statement deploring the behaviour of the tabloid press. As more break-ins came to light, Des Wilson, the Liberal Democrat campaign director, said his belief in chance was "being tested to extremes."

Mr Wilson said that his natural scepticism about conspiracy theories had been shaken by the discovery that seven local parties and the Independent Group, a senior adviser to Mr Ashdown, had been rifled over the past 18 months.

His suspicions were further aroused by the fact that in many cases the thieves had targeted computer software containing electorally valuable details of membership

records. Local Lib Dem parties were being contacted and asked to provide details of incidents that seemed trivial at the time but looked different in the light of the later events. A dossier would be sent to the Home Office or the police within 48 hours.

"There is now a need for a proper co-ordinated police inquiry into what is going on," Mr Wilson said. "There is a cause for concern that requires an inquiry. At what point do you go over the boundary from the cock-up theory to the conspiracy theory?"

Ex-lover's plea, page 2
From the gutter, page 14
Lowliest day, page 14
Letters, page 15

Heseltine orders demolition of blot on ministerial landscape

By JOHN YOUNG

ONE of the most hated buildings in London, No 2 Marsham Street, Westminster, home of the environment department for the past 20 years, is to be demolished. Demolition is expected to start within 18 months to two years. By the time the wrecking crews move in, the 3,000 headquarters staff of the environment and transport departments should be rehoused, probably in Docklands. Michael Heseltine, environment secretary, told the Commons of his decision yesterday in a written answer. "We have decided to knock it down," he said.

The building was much in need of repair and, after detailed technical studies, he was satisfied that repairs on the necessary scale would not be desirable. Options for the future of the site, including its sale, were being considered. In high good humour, Mr Heseltine gave a press conference on the terrace beneath the northernmost of the building's three glass and concrete towers. Half-jokingly, he said that the decision was the most dramatic thing he had done as environment secretary.

The building was first occupied in 1971 and has long been regarded as an eyesore. One of Mr Heseltine's predecessors said the view from his 17th-floor office was the best in London because it was the only place from which Marsham Street could not be seen. The concrete shell has been deteriorating, and protective scaffolding has been erected at the ends of each tower to prevent further damage. At the end of 1990, Arup Associates were commissioned in conjunction with the Property Services Agency to advise on various options for dealing with the problems. The report was delivered last year but will not be published.

Leading article, page 15

Political sketch

Boneheads pick political dogfight

MPs appear capable of making an election issue of anything. Nothing, it has seemed, is too important to escape the party dogfight. On Wednesday the foreign secretary told us that if Labour had been in power, "Soviet arms would be massed in Europe". And nothing is too obscure, on Monday Margaret Ewing (SNP, Moray) was blaming the government because a communication from the Department of Health had been sent to a deceased constituent. Is there anything which MPs cannot twist to political advantage?

I thought not. Until yesterday. At 3.16pm, parliament met its match. Let us start, though, at 2.33pm, after prayers: questions to the farm minister. Could barley sprout, could cows calve, could hens lay, without the Tories taking credit? Could frost blight or weevils destroy without Labour blaming the government?

It seemed not. In the hands of Alex Eadie (Lab, Midlothian) the slow movement of population from the land into the towns became a bitter consequence of Tory oppression. Robert Bosawen (C, Somerset & Frome), normally gruff, turned into a veritable Francis of Assisi, babbling excitedly of wildlife in environmentally sensitive areas and the government's measures to help little animals and flowers there.

Those of us who had not thought of Welwyn & Hatfield as a farming constituency were surprised to hear David Evans (C) loud in his support for British lamb: from Labour, he added, farmers would only get "a load of jelly". Indeed, replied agriculture minister John Gummer, and British lamb was "the best in the world". Labour's John P Smith (Vale of Glamorgan) protested at this slur against Welsh lamb; and Mr Gummer questioned Mr Smith's commitment to sheep farmers.

So it went on. Frank Haynes (Lab) from co-sleeping Ashfield seemed to argue that the Tory's poll tax was responsible for the high cost of poultry inspections and from another major farming constituency, Labour's Robert Parry (Riverside) joined the chorus of complaint against Tory treatment of "Britain's farmers". Later, when Opposition spokesman David Clark attacked

the government's record, Mr Gummer found this "rather hard to take from a man who has said we ought to eat New Zealand apples, and not eat British sausages". Apples, pears, sausages and chicken entrails flew back and forth across the chamber. Was there anything, we wondered, that an MP would be unable to pick up and hurl at an MP of another party?

There was. Sir Anthony Grant (C, Cambridgeshire SW) picked it up at the first questions: his own, to the PM. "When you were eight," he said to John Major, "and I was ... (he paused) ... a little older, the accession to the throne of Her Majesty the Queen ... I think you can guess the rest. All good stuff. Mr Major was delighted to endorse the sentiments."

"Hear, hear!" Tories growled, each hopeful that a fortuitous camera angle might translate into a TV signal, beaming their loyal grunts down the airwaves; and that a constituent might be at the other end. Labour growled even louder, aware that their enemies would be hoping they wouldn't. Somebody shouted "bollocks". Neil Kinnock rose.

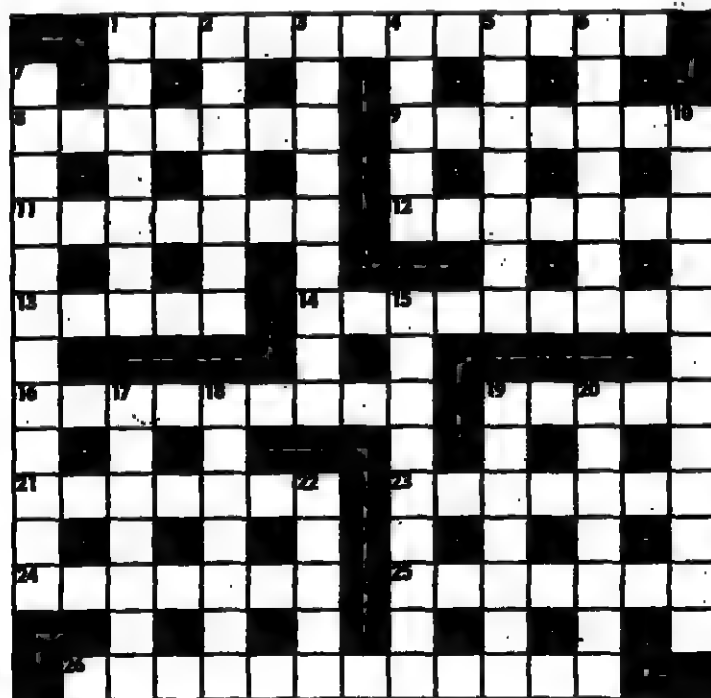
Do I dare remark that buried in the black hearts of just a couple of Tory MPs lay the secret hope that Mr Kinnock might find himself unable to echo Sir Anthony's enthusiasm for our monarchy and monarch? I do. Such MPs were disappointed. The Labour leader paid Her Majesty a graceful little tribute of his own. Paddy Ashdown remembered to do the same.

"Hear, hear!" Tories grunted their teeth. Sir Bernard Braine (C, Castle Point) rose. When Mr Major was eight and Sir Anthony was ... a little older, Sir Bernard was nearly forty. "As Father of the House, Mr Speaker ... and on he rambled, for some time. Later, Sir Alan Glynn (C, Windsor & Maidenhead) the MP with the most distinguished constituent of all had a shorter ramble. You couldn't actually hear what he was saying but it didn't matter. It was all marvelous."

Do you think the Queen watched it on TV? Did she hear the lovely things he said? I wonder whether Her Majesty ever throws things at her set?

MATTHEW PARRIS

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 18,835



ACROSS

- 1 If fed salad, it turns out very well (3,2,1,6).
- 8 Persuade cleric to board vessel (7).
- 9 Check the money received by an insignificant creature (7).
- 11 Colourful lady rejects stuff in tin (7).
- 12 A point ahead of defeat, this club (7).
- 13 Old Harry was, at any rate, covered (5).
- 14 I govern the endless work from day to day (9).
- 16 Make lace—keep it first inside a hat (3,3,3).
- 19 Fruit drink, about tuppence (5).
- 21 Intellectual G-man interrupting, forsooth (7).
- 23 Everybody, say, starts to run off quickly (7).

Solution to Puzzle No 18,834

DOWN
1 Alarm about end of perishable cargo (7).
2 Tried an unusual exchange (5-2).
3 Boat-type for Spooner to disparage (4-5).
4 Act freeing one but not the others (5).
5 Bud isn't developing—discard it here (7).
6 Looking at part of journey round Ireland (7).
7 Neighbours are familiar (2,4,6).
8 Be unable to get up before ten? The nobleman is a case in point (4,3,5).
9 Former vehicle used by dentist perhaps? (9).
10 "Become less lax", the giant said (7).
11 A chance to have one over the eight in the post office when given a rise (7).
12 Capital runner losing third place (7).
13 Gives colour to federal agents entering mine (7).
14 A number do this in the garden (5).

A daily safari through the language jungle. Which definitions are correct?
By Philip Howard

- MODENA
a. The strap of a flying harness
b. A type of sun
c. Deep people
- ENNICIA
a. Within the law
b. Pertaining to anatomy
c. Laying eggs
- BRUMMOUS
a. Eccentric brown
b. Flowing
c. Foggy
- MOROLOGICAL
a. Foolishness
b. The study of customs
c. Excessive individualism

Answers in Life & Times, page 9

For the latest AA traffic and roadworks information, 24 hours a day, dial 0836 401 followed by the appropriate code.

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M-ways/roads M4-M1 732
M-ways/roads M1-Dartford 733
M-ways/roads Dartford-T25 734
M-ways/roads M25-M4 735
M25 London Orbital only 736

National motorways
West Country 737
Wales 738
London 739
East Angles 740
North-east England 742
North-west England 743
Scotland 744
Northern Ireland 745

AA Roadwatch is charged at 36p per minute (cheap rate) and 48p per minute at all other times.

Act freeing one but not the others (5).
Bud isn't developing—discard it here (7).
Looking at part of journey round Ireland (7).
Neighbours are familiar (2,4,6).
Be unable to get up before ten? The nobleman is a case in point (4,3,5).
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"Become less lax", the giant said (7).
A chance to have one over the eight in the post office when given a rise (7).
Capital runner losing third place (7).
Gives colour to federal agents entering mine (7).
A number do this in the garden (5).

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Much of England and Wales is expected to have another dry and cloudy day although brighter intervals are likely in the east, the west Midlands and east Wales. Patchy drizzle is possible on western coasts while rain or drizzle in northern Scotland is expected to spread into the rest of Scotland and Northern Ireland. The south and east will, however, remain mainly dry. Mild everywhere and windy in the north. Outlook: rain spreading from the west.

MONDAY: 1-4pm; 5-8pm; 9-11pm										Sun		Rain		Max	
cloudy; 1-4pm; 5-8pm; 9-11pm															
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FRIDAY FEBRUARY 7 1992

BUSINESS EDITOR JOHN BELL

TODAY IN BUSINESS

BULL BY HORNS

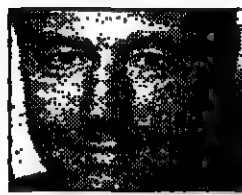
Bull

IBM's \$110 million investment in Bull, the French state-owned computer group, shatters European dreams of an indigenous electronics industry
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IN REVERSE

Price cutting and discount deals failed to prevent car sales in January slumping to the lowest level recorded since 1982
Page 20

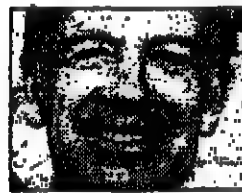
TAKING FLIGHT



John Olsen is spreading his wings, leaving Cathay Pacific to join Dan-Air as chief executive at a critical time for the British airline
Page 21

TOMORROW

PROFILE



Robin Higgins, the chief executive of BICC, is ambitious, but he puts his family first. Carol Leonard discovers

SAFETY NET

The investor protection system is being radically overhauled but firms may continue to slip through the net

THE POUND

US dollar 1.875 (+0.0070)

German mark 2.8702 (-0.0013)

Exchange index 91.2 (+0.1)

Bank of England official close (4pm)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 share 1961.2 (-9.7)

FT-SE 100 2534.3 (-12.8)

New York Dow Jones 3261.63 (+4.03)

Tokyo Nikkei Ave 22104.92 (+168.55)

INTEREST RATES

London: Bank Base 10 1/2%
3-month interbank 10 1/2%
3-month eligible bills 10 9/16%
US: Prime Rate 6 1/2%
Federal Funds 4 1/2%
3-month Treasury Bills 3.82-3.80%
30-year bonds 10 3/4-10 3/8%

CURRENCIES

London: New York
£/\$ 1.8755
£/DM 2.8702
£/Sfr 1.4950
£/FFr 16.6667
£/Yen 160.36
£/ECU 1.9363
£/A\$ 1.5478
£/NZ\$ 1.3563
£/R\$ 1.3673
£/Ruf 200.48
£/Rw 200.48
£/S\$ 1.4950
£/T\$ 1.3673
£/Z\$ 1.3673

GOLD

London: Gold 385.25
Gold 385.25-385.45
New York: Gold 385.25-385.45

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Feb) 18.55 bbl (\$18.55)

RETAIL PRICES

RPI: 135.7 December (1987=100)
* Denotes midday trading price

Dash for gas yields seventh contract

GEC Alsthom wins £580m PowerGen deal

By Ross Tieman, Industrial Correspondent

GEC Alsthom has won a £580 million contract to build a 1,360 megawatt gas-fired power station for PowerGen, Britain's second-largest fossil fuel generating company, to be sited at Connah's Quay, North Wales.

The gas power station order is the seventh secured in Britain by the Anglo-French manufacturer since the start of last year, when the newly privatised generating industry embarked on a "dash for gas" to replace older coal-fired power stations.

PowerGen's decision to proceed with Connah's Quay highlights the scale of power station building in Britain, and the role of technology based on aero-engines to harness gas as a fuel.

The orders secured by GEC Alsthom alone will provide generating capacity amounting to more than 5,000 megawatts, almost a tenth of the total capacity in England and Wales. Siemens, of Germany, and Asea Brown Boveri, the Swedish-Swiss

group, have also won orders to build gas-fired plants in the UK.

GEC Alsthom, a 50-50 joint venture between Lord Weinstock's General Electric Company and Alcatel Alsthom, of France, is now the front-runner in the United Kingdom market for new power stations. Its UK orders for gas-fired plants total £1.6 billion. Kelvin Bray, the chairman of GEC Alsthom's subsidiary European Gas Turbines, said talks over further orders were continuing.

The wholesale renewal of a large chunk of baseload generating capacity comes at a time when Britain's two biggest privatised generating groups, National Power and PowerGen, are already under attack for steep price increases.

Critics say it would be cheaper to keep old coal plants running even though they are much less efficient at converting heat into electricity. The generators say replacing part of Britain's capacity with gas turbines will enable emissions to be reduced while

building only a minimum of immensely expensive desulphurisation equipment onto existing coal-fired plants.

Since its privatisation, PowerGen has announced the closure of four coal plants, with a combined capacity of nearly 1,000 megawatts. By 1995, when Connah's Quay comes on stream, the company will have added almost 3,000 megawatts of gas plant.

Connah's Quay will be built on the site of a coal power station which closed in 1982. PowerGen's first gas-fired plant, at Killingholme, south Humberside, will come on stream later this year. A second, at Rye House, Hertfordshire, is planned to begin generating in 1994. Both will use Siemens technology.

But rising gas prices have given an added advantage to GEC Alsthom. Since 1984, Alsthom has been working with General Electric of America to develop an engine, used to power Boeing 747 aircraft, for power generation. The resulting turbine, the 9F, has an energy conversion efficiency of 54 per cent, more than 2 per cent ahead of any rival, according to Mr Bray.

The turbines to be installed in Britain will be part-manufactured by GE in South Carolina and completed at GEC Alsthom's Belfort plant in eastern France. Steam turbines and generators will be manufactured at Rugby, Warwickshire, and Stafford. Overall, 55 per cent of the work will be carried out in the UK and up to 1,000 people will be employed building Connah's Quay.

Because of the growth in demand, GEC Alsthom is investing £100 million to enable the Belfort plant to build the whole turbine from 1995 onwards, and to increase capacity in response to growing demand for power generation gas turbines from continental Europe and the Pacific rim.



Seat on the board: Ann Burdus brings her international experience to the board as a non-executive director

BAe cuts 450 jobs but may buy Prestwick

By Our Industrial Correspondent

BRITISH Aerospace is to cut 450 jobs in its dynamics division, the company claimed last March. The cutbacks will fall hardest upon the Stevenage site, where the headcount will be reduced by 300 to 3,700. Stevenage is centre of BAE missile research and development.

At the missile manufacturing plant at Lostock, near Bolton, Lancashire, the workforce will be cut by 130 to 1,470. The workforce at the Bristol systems integration operation will also be cut, by 20, to 830.

David Laybourn, managing director of the dynamics division, said the cutbacks were necessary to protect the future of the business. He insisted, however, that delays in purchases by the British and foreign governments were increasing the pressures on the business.

"If an early positive decision is not forthcoming on Asraam, our ability to bid for or undertake major guided weapons projects for the Ministry of Defence will be damaged," he said.

Final tenders to supply Asraam, an advanced air-to-air missile intended to replace the Sidewinder now in service with the Royal Air Force, were submitted at the end of January. BAE is bidding against BGT of Germany and a consortium comprising Matra of France and GEC, Marconi of Britain.

Alan Clark, the defence procurement minister, has promised a decision by early spring.

BAe is thought to believe that further job losses within the dynamics division will be unavoidable if the company does not receive an order by April. BAE says the missile has excellent export potential. It is bought by the Ministry of Defence.

BAe is developing Glasgow as Scotland's international airport in place of Prestwick. But BAE relies upon the Prestwick runway to fly out completed Jetstream 31 and 41 commuter aircraft, and for the operation of its commercial flying school.

The latest job losses in the dynamics division, to take effect by May, are in addition to 2,400 announced last March. The cutbacks will fall hardest upon the Stevenage site, where the headcount will be reduced by 300 to 3,700. Stevenage is centre of BAE missile research and development.

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Receivers put in at Forwell Group

By Neil Bennett, Banking Correspondent

LLOYDS Bank has appointed receivers to Forwell Group, an office design and fitting business in Middlesbrough, after the company's failure to repay debts of £1.4 million.

Timothy Harris and Christopher Hughes from Cork Gully, the insolvency specialists, were appointed on Tuesday evening, although the news was reported to the stock exchange only yesterday.

The bank admitted that it had been guilty of "unprofessional behaviour" in writing to some of Forwell's staff telling them that the company was bankrupt even though it was still trying to negotiate a rescue package.

One employee was told that her overdraft was frozen until she contacted the branch about her employment situation. A Lloyds spokeswoman said the bank had apologised to the company and the staff about the letters.

Forwell owns properties worth more than £1.5 million, which means that Lloyds' loans are likely to be repaid in full. The group's unsecured creditors, however, will receive little or nothing. The shares, suspended at 3p, are thought to be worthless.

Until last week, Michael Wheller, Forwell's chairman, and the South Yorkshire Pension Fund, a 16 per cent shareholder, were trying to rescue the company, and hoping to appoint Postern Executive Group, a firm of company doctors.

A letter from Postern to the company last month said that it believed there was a viable core business that could be saved. Forwell lost £1.1 million in 1990 but is thought to have broken even last year despite the recession.

The receivers hope, to sell Forwell's contracts, one of Forwell's main subsidiaries, to a management buyout team. The rest of the group, which had 45 employees, is likely to be wound up.

A Lloyds spokesman said: "A banking relationship relies on an active dialogue and accurate information. Unfortunately, that is not always forthcoming. We have been working with Forwell for a long time to try to find a solution to their problems. Regrettably, there wasn't one."

Comment, page 23

Price rise pledge, page 21

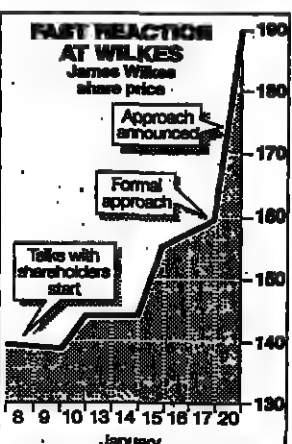
Advisers rebuked by panel

By Martin Waller

THREE financial advisers have been rebuked by the City's takeover panel for their actions in the £36.6 million hostile takeover bid by Petrocon, the engineering and surveying business, for James Wilkes, another engineer.

The bid was announced on Monday, but it is the events leading up to the news that have attracted the panel's concern. In particular a 26 per cent rise in the Wilkes share price to 189p while behind-the-scenes negotiations were going on.

Henry Cooke Lumsden, the Manchester broker, bought a parcel of Wilkes shares on behalf of Petrocon on January 10, when the price was 140p. Between January 8 and 16, Cooke's corporate finance side, in conjunction with Smith New Court Corporate Finance, secretly sounded out a total of 14 institutional shareholders, far



more than normal, to see if they would support a bid.

By the end of that period the share price was 10 per cent higher, and the panel has ruled that both banks were in breach of the City code of not consulting with them when they started to widen the discussions and again by not consulting when the

share price began to move. Cooke had no comment, but Smith New Court blamed an excess of enthusiasm: it appears each contacted shareholders while unaware the other was doing so. The Stock Exchange's insider dealing unit is investigating the affair, but the panel does not believe there were any untoward transactions.

Once informal bid talks between the two companies had broken down, Rothschilds, adviser to Wilkes, should have put out a formal announcement on January 20, before a further rise in the bid price. The panel held the bank primarily responsible for a breach of the code but did not make a direct criticism of the bank's behaviour.

Rothschilds says the delay in putting out the announcement was caused by difficulties in getting ratification from the Wilkes board.

Comment, page 23

Trying to find the designer ecu

From Tom Walker in Brussels

EUROPEAN socialist MEPs have upped the stakes in the battle to produce the Eurocurrency of the future by offering a week-long visit to Strasbourg to anyone who can design a fitting pattern for an ecu note or coin. Sceptics at the ecu competition launch suggested the second prize might be two weeks.

Jean-Pierre Cot, the socialist group president, wasn't deterred, however, saying: "The desire for an ecu is being carried by a tide of popular opinion."

M Cot produced an array of figures to back up the emotional cry for one continent, one currency. He also detailed a theoretical journey in which £100 became £44 just through today's routine currency exchanges across nine EC borders. The socialists promise that, as well as free trips to the Euro-altar in Strasbourg, the winning overall design will be minted as a coin "in a limited run".

There are three categories for those wishing to enter the competition — under-11s, over-11s and professional graphic designers.

M Cot conceded that despite the desire for a single currency, the very word "ecu" is controversial. In Germany, it is virtually unpronounceable; in Belgium, its principal connotation is as a 28 per cent proof beer. M Cot produced the first designs for the competition, produced by "Nathalie", a Strasbourg student. Nathalie's notes consist of rather busy European maps, splodges of colour and a wilting flower, the Europa, which, perhaps prophetically, died out in the sixteenth century.

In the commission, meanwhile, the debate rages as to what to call one-hundredth of an ecu. The Latin term "as", used for small coins in Roman times, has been suggested but faces ridicule from Anglophones. All national denominations — pence, cents, pen-

nies and the like — have been ruled out. The commission estimates that 68 billion ecu coins will be needed to float the new currency. This would assume 200 coins for each of the Community's 340 million inhabitants.

The socialist competition is vying with a similar challenge launched in France, and sponsored by the French government to the tune of 500,000 of those old-fashioned things called francs. Pierre Bérégovoy, the French finance minister, has questioned the need for any royalty to appear on ecus, but Britain was given the wink at Maastricht that the Queen could appear on one side of the new currency.

M Cot admitted that all currency names would be welcomed in his competition, even conceding that something called the pound would be considered for Euro-dominance. "I don't think it would get very far, though," he said.

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Car sales fall to lowest for 10 years

BY KEVIN EASON, MOTORING CORRESPONDENT

CAR sales last month fell to their lowest since 1982 in spite of price cutting and discount deals for fleet buyers.

January figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders indicated that relief for the motor industry is a long way off after a 1991 performance in which sales fell by a fifth.

The government was hoping for a slight recovery, but sales of new cars sank to 153,682, 6.02 per cent below the January 1991 total.

However, the industry said the 6 per cent drop was distorted by late registrations in the last few days of the month by manufacturers willing to do cheap deals of the sort criticised by the monopolies commission's investigation into car pricing this week.

The commission said large discounts to fleets forced manufacturers to charge private buyers more.

After 20 days of the month, the market was down 16 per cent, with Vauxhall leading Ford, traditionally Britain's largest car company, with a 21.3 per cent share of the market compared with Ford's 18.3 per cent.

However, Ford is thought to have registered about 15,000 cars in the last few days of the month to take sales to 38,502 and a market share of 25.05 per cent.

Vauxhall slipped back to a 19.94 per cent share, registering 30,643 cars, while Rover suffered worst, with its market share slipping from

15.4 per cent the previous January, to 11.95 per cent with 18,367 cars registered last month.

Vauxhall said: "A fall of just 6 per cent in January sales does not indicate in any way that the recession in the new car market is easing. The figure masked a lot of activity in the final few days of the month which seemed to involve what we can only describe as unpredictable market forces."

Sir Hal Miller, chief executive of the SMMT, said: "While the shortfall was the smallest since March, 1990, it is still the lowest January total since 1982 and down 25 per cent on January, 1990, which, in turn, was more than 6 per cent below 1989."

"This all adds up to continuing bad news for the motor industry and demonstrates that a boost for car sales is still desperately needed."

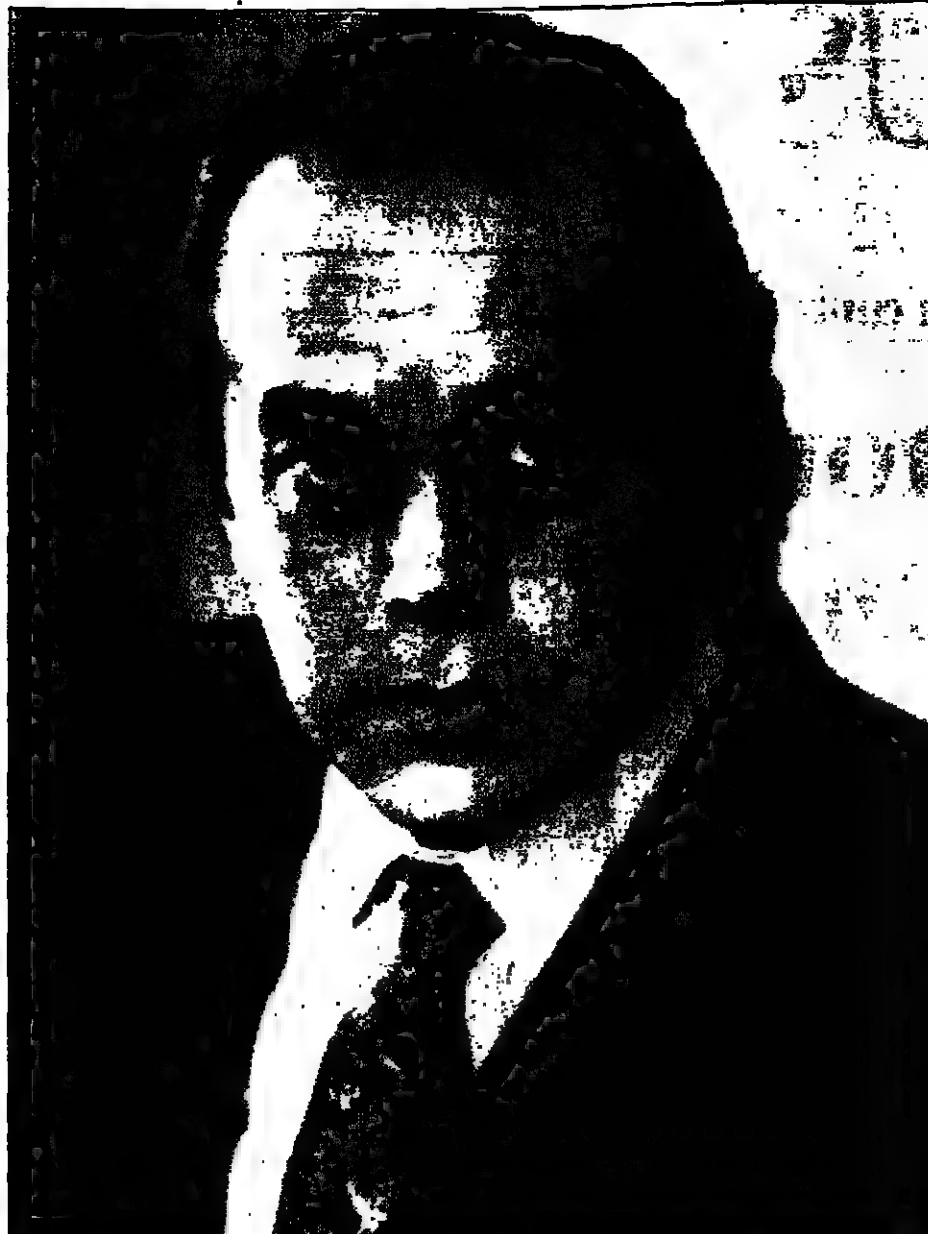
Ford has been working hard in recent weeks to clear a huge backlog of cars made in 1991 with heavy discounts.

There was a good performance from Peugeot Talbot, which further increased its market share from 7.19 per cent to 8.05 per cent with 12,378 registrations.

Sales of Jaguars continued to slide, with January down from 806 in the same month of 1991 to 561, while Rolls-Royce/Bentley sales also dropped from 107 to 75 and Lotus from 187 to just 66.

Nissan, in its first month under the direct control of the Japanese manufacturer, suffered a drop in sales from 7,238 to 4,819. Audi-Volkswagen registrations also fell, as did those of Fiat, Honda, Volvo, Alfa Romeo, Mazda, Saab and Skoda, while Mercedes-Benz was about the same. There were increases for Toyota, Suzuki, Seat, Renault, Porsche and Citroën.

Mr Justice Knox did not accept that Mr Nadir might prejudice his criminal defence by giving evidence in the civil action. But he asked for undertakings from the plaintiff for Mr Nadir's protection. The judge ordered



Court setback: Mr Nadir lost his plea for a postponement of the civil action

Nadir fails to delay civil suit

ASIL Nadir, former chairman of Polly Peck International, has failed in the High Court to postpone a £378 million civil suit while he faces a separate criminal prosecution. Christopher Morris, the Polly Peck joint administrator from Touche Ross, is suing Mr Nadir on behalf of Polly Peck to recover the sum, which is owed to creditors.

Mr Justice Knox did not accept that Mr Nadir might prejudice his criminal defence by giving evidence in the civil action. But he asked for undertakings from the plaintiff for Mr Nadir's protection. The judge ordered

that future hearings in the civil action should be heard in closed court until the case comes to trial. He said it was highly unlikely the civil case will come to trial before the criminal action.

The prosecution must not disclose any information received in evidence from Mr Nadir to third parties. But information can be passed to co-administrators, Richard Stone and Michael Jordan, who are running the commercial affairs of Polly Peck, potential witnesses and the creditors committee, on condition they observe the confidentiality rule.

The judge, on a request

from David Oliver, counsel for Polly Peck, allowed the administrators to use information from the defence to help gain control of company assets in northern Cyprus.

The court heard the administrators were still struggling to gain control of these assets. Summing up, the judge said the £378 million claim against Mr Nadir was based on alleged fraudulent breach of duty, involving 263 payments and misappropriation of property.

The court also established that Mr Nadir's legal fees were being met by a third party. Mr Nadir was made bankrupt last month.

Rent cuts put life in West End market

BY MATTHEW BOND

DRAMATIC cuts in asking rents are at last injecting some life into the depressed West End office market, according to Neil Sinclair, joint managing director of Sinclair Goldsmith, the quoted property agent.

But while the stimulating effect of such cut-price rents is good news for the letting market, the substantial reductions could send a new chill through the investment market, where valuations are usually based on the latest evidence of open-market rents rather than the rent an incumbent tenant is actually paying.

Mr Sinclair's comments came after his firm had successfully let a 45,000 sq ft building in St Martin's Lane to Carlton Television, the new holder of the London weekday commercial television franchise.

The letting, he believed, was the largest single transaction to have taken place in the West End for more than a year.

When the building was completed last June, the initial asking rent sought by its developer, Grosvenor Square Properties, was £47.50 a square foot.

Mr Sinclair said, however, that it was quickly realised that such a rent was simply unrealistic in the current market. So in the autumn of last year the asking rent was cut by a third to £31.80 a square foot.

The landlord very sensibly decided to cut the rent to a level where we could be certain of attracting interest, and it worked," Mr Sinclair said. The final rent that Carlton will pay GSP, a subsidiary of ABP, has not been disclosed, but Mr Sinclair said it was "not far off" the reduced asking rent.

Mr Sinclair thinks that every bit as significant as the successful letting of the building is the fact that there was a serious under-bidder.

He added: "Tenants are now coming back into the market because they think it has dropped to a level where it is unlikely to fall further."

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

TSW confirms appeal to Lords over licence

TELEVISION South West will take its case to the House of Lords after failing on Wednesday in a legal challenge to the loss of its licence to a lower cash bidder in October's ITV auction. After a board meeting yesterday, TSW said it would appeal "in view of the importance of the case to TSW and the shortcomings in the Independent Television Commission's decision-making process."

Three Court of Appeal judges refused by a two-to-one majority on Wednesday to quash the ITC's decision to award the licence to Westcountry Television, which bid £7.8 million against TSW's £16.1 million. TSW, which was granted leave to appeal despite the opposition of Westcountry and the ITC, said it hoped the House of Lords would hear its case this month.

Eastern diversifies

EASTERN Electricity, one of the 12 privatised electricity distributors in England and Wales, has set up a subsidiary to sell combined heat and power systems in Britain. Eastern will distribute the Nutec range made by Nedalo, a Dutch business that has about 12 per cent of the British combined heat and power market. The systems, ranging from 30 kilowatts to 770 kilowatts, are mainly used by commercial premises, such as local authority buildings, hotels and leisure centres, where a supply of electricity and steam is needed.

AmBrit defence costs

AMBRIT International, the oil and gas exploration group, spent £420,000 defending itself against Pittencrieff, an unwanted bidder. AmBrit, which last month recommended a £7 million offer from United Energy, another oil and gas explorer, discloses the figure in its results for the year to December 31. These show a 26.2 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £127,000. The 1990 figures were boosted by higher oil prices at the time of the Gulf confrontation. Turnover was £2.64 million against £2.53 million. There is again no dividend.

Court issues tax ruling

INFLATION will be taken fully into account when capital gains tax liability on assets acquired before 1965 is calculated. That is the effect of a Court of Appeal decision on a test case. The Inland Revenue has contended that the allowance was partly lost on assets acquired before the tax was introduced. The test case was brought by a consortium led by David Colison, tax partner of Peters, Elworthy & Moore, a Cambridge accountancy firm, on behalf of a client who inherited antique furniture in 1952. The Inland Revenue can appeal to the House of Lords.

Trump protection plan

TWO of Donald Trump's hotel-casinos in Atlantic City, New Jersey, plan to file for chapter 11 bankruptcy protection next month in an effort to reorganise their debts. Such action by managers at the Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino and Trump's Castle Casino Resort would mirror that taken last year by Mr Trump's other casino, the Trump Taj Mahal Casino Resort. Pre-packaged bankruptcies, for which the managers say they plan to file, secure bondholder approvals beforehand to speed what can otherwise be a costly and lengthy stay in the American bankruptcy court.

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Britain wants Unctad to go for 'trade rather than aid'

BY COLIN NARBROUGH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN will seek to focus the work of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad) on the poorest economies and underline the need to pursue development through trade rather than aid, according to Tim Sainsbury, the trade minister.

Mr Sainsbury will represent the government at the Unctad VIII gathering in Cartagena, Colombia, starting on Sunday and to be attended by about 2,000 delegates from 150 countries.

In an interview with *The Times*, he said he believed the new international environment, and the growing recognition among the developing countries of the need for greater self reliance, meant that Cartagena would represent a "great opportunity". But he made clear that that did not mean telling the developing world "now boys you're on your own".

The time was right, however, for a change of approach to economic development, with the emphasis on "each country being primarily responsible for its own development", he said. This is in keeping with the stance the World Bank and other international agencies have adopted in recent years to foster "good government" as the



Sainsbury: self-reliance key to attracting financial resources into developing countries.

Kenneth Daxile, the Unctad secretary-general, said this week that he expected the Cartagena meeting to open the way to UNCTAD becoming a more relevant, effective and flexible organisation.

Mr Sainsbury is keen to point out that dependency on aid has already dwindled remarkably in many parts of the world. Even in Africa, only about 8 per cent of income comes from foreign aid. In Latin America, the figure is below 1 per cent. Reflecting the government's efforts to relieve the debt problems of the poorest nations, Mr Sainsbury said: "The real debate ought to be focusing on the genuinely least developed

countries." At present, rapidly advancing economies, such as Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea, are grouped as developing nations alongside the poverty-stricken nations of sub-Saharan Africa.

The change of attitude apparent among the developing nations over the best approach to development is, in Mr Sainsbury's view, partly attributable to the collapse of communism in Europe. This has removed the scope for developing countries to play off one bloc against another to pursue economic benefit. Defence spending has also been reduced with the end of East-West confrontation.

Mr Sainsbury, while opposed to international commodity pacts, such as those for coffee, rubber and oil, does not expect developing countries with natural resources to want to terminate the pacts, however well or badly they function. "Producers will always hanker after managed markets," he said.

This week's call from Sir Leon Brittan, the European commissioner, for the broader Gatt framework to be responsible for competition rules worldwide, is likely to be debated at Cartagena, as Unctad has responsibility for restrictive practices. Any merging of the two organisations at this stage would, however, be highly premature, Mr Sainsbury said.

Exor bid ruling confirmed

BY MARTIN BARROW

FRANCE's stock market regulator has confirmed his ruling that Exor, which with its allies forms the main shareholder in Source Perrier, must make a bid for two thirds of the company.

Under French bourse rules a shareholder, or group of shareholders, who hold more than one third of the equity have to bid for two thirds. Another rule requires counter-bidders to offer a price at least 2 per cent higher than the original bid, or offer the same price without conditions.

Exor, which is appealing against the ruling, said that if it is forced to bid for Perrier the offer may be worth just Fr1,235 a share.

Nestlé and Indosuez have bid Fr1,475 a share for all Perrier's capital. They have also reserved the right to drop their bid if they obtain less than 51 per cent of Perrier.

An Exor spokesman said that the bid price rule did not apply to Exor and its allies because Nestlé and Indosuez launched their bid after an Exor ally increased its stake, the move which triggered the Exor bid requirement.

Exor said that if it is constrained to make a bid, the price could be as low as that paid by Saint-Louis when it bought a block of Perrier treasury stock on January 3, two weeks before the Nestlé and Indosuez bid.

UK accident report angers Cyprus

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU
IN NICOSIA

ACCUSATIONS by Britain's Marine Accident Investigation Branch that Cyprus's shipping legislation may be inadequate were furiously denied by government officials on the island, which has worked hard to become a leading maritime nation.

Britain's criticisms came in a draft report on an accident last April in which a Cyprus-flagged cargo vessel sailed on after colliding in bad weather with a Portsmouth fishing trawler whose crew of six drowned. A court in Cyprus later dismissed all charges against the captain and first mate of the Cypriot ship, saying there was no evidence to prove they willfully abandoned the stricken trawler.

The BMAIB report was damning in its general conclusions. Captain Peter Marriot, chief inspector of accidents, said: "There is evidence that the Cyprus merchant shipping legislation may be

inadequate, in parts, to enable the appropriate authority to enforce and fully discharge their international obligations as a leading maritime nation."

Serghios Serghiou, the director of merchant shipping in Cyprus, said: "I believe they made this report to satisfy public opinion in Portsmouth."

"Cyprus is an easy victim because we're not a powerful nation."

With 2,100 ships totalling more than 20 million gross tons, Cyprus has the sixth-largest fleet in the world. Keen to avoid criticism that it is a flag of convenience, it has launched an expensive campaign in recent years to improve standards and services.

Limassol claims to be the world's leading ship management centre, hosting companies like Hamsatic, Colambia, and Seafarers, attracted by a combination of tax incentives, good telecommunications, a skilled local workforce and low living costs.

Loukis Loucaides, Cyprus's deputy at-

torney general, who unsuccessfully prosecuted the case against the Zulfikar's captain and first mate, said: "It's a very unfair, inaccurate and misleading report, the motives of which I suspect. Throughout, I don't believe the British authorities have acted objectively. Like in Britain, our courts are independent. As prosecutor, I may even have disagreed with the Zulfikar decision, but it was bona fide and I respect it."

Cyprus appointed a special committee two years ago to upgrade its shipping laws to match international standards and its work will soon be completed, Mr Serghiou said. But, he added that, concerning maritime safety, Cyprus is already up to date, having ratified the International Safety of Life at Sea Convention in 1985.

Bereaved families in Portsmouth last November branded the court's decision a whitewash.

The case was tried under British and international maritime law.

Domestic customers to benefit from results of Littlechild enquiry into electricity charges

Watchdog promises power price rises of less than inflation

By ROSS TITMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

ELECTRICITY prices for domestic customers in England and Wales will rise on average by less than the rate of inflation in the financial year beginning in April, Professor Stephen Littlechild, the director general of electricity supply, has promised.

Professor Littlechild, head of Oftec, the regulatory body, said he had secured a commitment to increases averaging less than 3.7 per cent. In total, increases would secure revenue for the companies £30 million below the maximum to which they are entitled under the inflation-linked price control formula.

The director general launched an enquiry into the price rise plans of nine of the companies last October because he was concerned that inflation for the year to the end of this March would turn out below expectations when prices for the year were set.

Professor Littlechild has concluded that eight of the

companies will in total receive £60 million more from customers than they should. Four companies, London Electricity, Manweb, Seaboard and Yorkshire Electricity, have promised to refund any excess receipts to customers by charging less next year.

Four other companies, Eastern Electricity, Northern Electric, Norweb and Southern Electric, have insisted that they are entitled to keep the extra revenue, but have agreed to refund excess receipts through lower prices anyway.

The modest increases for domestic customers contrast sharply with forecasts that bulk power prices will rise by 25 to 30 per cent this year. However, the cost of generating electricity makes up a small component of domestic bills. Most of the cost of supplying households relates to maintenance of a complex distribution network.

Large industrial users, for whom the generating charge

is a much bigger element, face much steeper price increases. Professor Littlechild warned the generators yesterday that he will be monitoring prices in the pool, or spot market, for electricity very closely.

He said customers should regard the outcome of his efforts as satisfactory. However, "regulation would be more straightforward and the companies, as well as customers would benefit, if the controls were less dependent on forecasts of inflation".

The director general said he would take on board the lessons of the enquiry in his forthcoming review of price controls on the power companies.

Removal of the link between power prices and inflation would be warmly welcomed by many economists and businessmen, who have argued that it helps to perpetuate inflationary pressures in the economy.

John Collier, chairman of Nuclear Electric, the state-owned atomic power company, has written to the Major Energy Users' Council, protesting at plans by large industrial companies to withhold payment of the 11 per cent levy on power bills used to subsidise the nuclear industry.

Mr Collier said the increase in prices in the electricity pool, which triggered the companies' protest plan, has "nothing to do with the levy". He said most of the £1.2 billion-a-year subsidy was needed to pay for decommissioning of the stations when they reach the end of their lives.

He added: "The viability of both National Power and PowerGen is being assured by subsidies in their hedging contracts with the regional electricity companies, at a level roughly equivalent to the levy."

Real price rises in the pool are inevitable because generators' true operating costs as these subsidies decline.



Ties that bind: Stephen Littlechild wants to see price controls less dependent on inflation forecasts

Salomon leaps 67% despite oil loss

FROM PHILIP ROBINSON IN NEW YORK

SALOMON Inc. the scandal-hit Wall Street investment bank, yesterday reported a 67 per cent rise in net profits despite losses in its oil business.

Last year was one of the best on record for Wall Street firms, many of whose profits tripled or even quadrupled on the back of a surging stock market and an avalanche of new share and bond issues. Salomon said last month that its figures would not match optimistic forecasts of analysts. Net profits rose last year from \$303 million to \$507 million on total revenues up from \$8.9 billion to \$9.1 billion.

The bank's Wall Street profits more than doubled from \$416 million to \$1.036

billion, but the Phibro Energy oil trading and refining business plunged \$34 million into the red. In 1990, Phibro's \$492 million profit accounted for more than half the group total.

Andrew Hall, the former BP executive who is president of Phibro, was paid \$23 million during that year. Mr Hall's salary, which is linked to the performance of the division he heads, is expected to drop this year.

Salomon's new management, headed by Warren Buffett, the billionaire investor, with Deryck Maughan as chief operating officer, has recently changed the system of paying what some analysts regard as excessive bonuses to some of the firm's individuals.

Salomon has suffered a wave of defections of senior

staff in its research department after bonuses were declared. It is expected to announce more departures this month, after paying out the \$130 million bonus pool to senior managing directors. The pool was set up five years ago to keep staff in the aftermath of the 1987 stock market crash.

Salomon declines to break down its figures, but says its Wall Street profits were generated largely from bonds, arbitrage and the highly specialised investments derived from the stock and bond markets. It has already said its breaches of the Treasury bond market rules did not generate a significant profit.

Last August, Salomon admitted breaching the rules in several of the US government Treasury bond auctions but it has not yet been estab-

lished that Salomon committed any wrongdoing in the "short squeeze" last May, in which prices were driven higher and some market traders claim they incurred losses. Four of Salomon's top executives resigned over the scandal.

Investment banking added \$80 million profit, reversing declines in 1989 and 1990 as fees from underwriting new cash-raising by American corporations offset the drop in bids and deals. Its oil refining operations, the third-largest in America, lost \$60 million in the final three months of last year, largely because of a writedown of the value of the oil in its pipes.

Donald Howard, Salomon's finance director, said the oil operations had not been "terribly profitable" throughout the year.

Figures suggest delay in recovery

BY COLIN NARBROUGH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT
THE downturn in business confidence reported by the Confederation of British Industry was the main cause of an 0.6 per cent fall in the government's longer leading indicator for January, the Central Statistical Office (CSO) said.

In the City, the drop in the longer leader, which tracks turning points in economic activity about ten months ahead, and a slight downturn in the shorter leading index, which looks four months forward, were seen as confirmation that recovery will be delayed this year, with a modest upturn coming only in the second half.

Robert Lind, economist at UBS Phillips & Drew, said a fallback in the indicators had been expected on the basis of recent survey evidence and official economic data. He believes output could fall for a few months before a "mild upturn" in the second half of this year.

The CSO said the longer leading index turned up in May 1990 and continued to rise until last October.

Provisional figures suggest that a turning point may have been reached last May in the shorter leading index, which has also shown a slight downturn because of the latest gloomy survey results and lower registrations of new cars.

The coincident index, which traces the business cycle, has started to decline at a markedly slower rate since last May, after more favourable survey evidence on stocks and capacity. The CSO has, however, cautioned against reading too much into the coincident data, given their partial nature.

In Washington, Nicholas Brady, the treasury secretary, said there were "some encouraging signs" for America, although many factors had made the economy sluggish.

In testimony to the Senate budget committee, he said the spiral of rising prices had been halted and interest rates were now at the lowest for 20 years. All this had occurred against the backdrop of the end of the cold war. That would prove to be, over time, an economic stimulus of enormous proportions, Mr Brady said.

Team of three is named to replace chief of Lloyd's

By JONATHAN PRYNN

THE search for a successor to Alan Lord as chief executive of Lloyd's of London has been postponed for at least a year, pending completion and implementation of a report on the future governance of the market.

Lloyd's had intended to appoint a replacement to take over when Mr Lord retires in June. Goddard Kay Rogers, a firm of headhunters, was hired last year to draw up a short list of candidates.

However, the plans have been abandoned after controversy over the rejection by the Council of Lloyd's of recommendations on governance in the recent Rowland Task Force report. The section on governance, which recommended splitting the council's regulatory and market operating roles, was the only part of the report to be rejected out of hand by the council.

Adverse reaction to the decision led to the appointment last month of a working party, to be chaired by Sir Jeremy Morse, chairman of Lloyd's Bank, to examine the governance issue. That was widely seen as a climbdown by the council.

Mr Lord said yesterday that from July 1 his role

would be taken over by a triumvirate of senior Lloyd's officials: John Gaynor, the head of finance, Andrew Duguid, head of market services, and Bob Hewes, head of regulatory services.

The appointment of the three-man team would ensure "the continued management of the Corporation in the style we have become used to in the past few years". Mr Lord said there would be "no hiatus, no lacuna".

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Mr Lord said yesterday that from July 1 his role

Kevin Maxwell questioned

By NEIL BENNETT

BANKING CORRESPONDENT
KEVIN Maxwell was questioned in a private hearing in the High Court yesterday about the whereabouts of the missing Maxwell company pension funds.

The court session follows his submission on Wednesday of an affidavit to the pension fund liquidators. This, for the first time, details the financial dealings of Bishopsgate Investment Management, the company that managed the bulk of the pension money, where Mr Maxwell was a director.

Robson Rhodes, the liquidator of BIM, is trying to trace up to £400 million of pension fund assets. Mr Maxwell was questioned under oath in front of a companies court registrar. The hearing is expected to continue today. Mr Maxwell had claimed that he had the right to remain silent to avoid the risk of self-incrimination.

On Monday, he lost his legal battle to remain silent when the House of Lords refused his appeal request. The Court of Appeal had earlier decided that the Insolvency Act forced him to hand over details about BIM's affairs.

France challenges Brittan over state firms' accounts

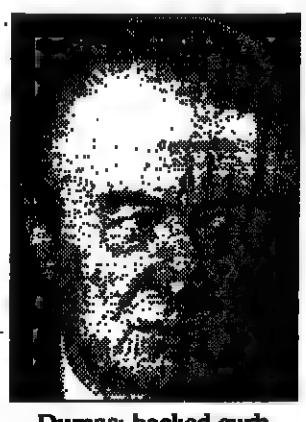
FROM TOM WALKER IN BRUSSELS

FRANCE has challenged Sir Leon Brittan before the European Court of Justice over his edict that leading European Community public-sector companies should submit accounts to Brussels every year.

The move is just the latest development in the catalogue of French objections to the competition commissioner's increasingly vigilant watch over state-aided industrial groups, which pepper the industrial spectrum in France.

The rules are intended to help the Commission detect state aids, such as the sweeteners paid to British Aerospace for the Rover acquisition, at an early stage and thus prevent lengthy legal wrangles. France, which had to recover nearly £1 billion from Renault in the most famous EC state-aid case, says the new regime is over-intrusive.

"We are contesting the substance as well as the form of these rules. We think the commission is discriminating against public-sector companies - large private companies are not required to submit these reports. It puts



Dumas: backed curb public companies in an inferior position, a French official said.

present array of competition weapons from the full 17-member commission.

Roland Dumas, the French foreign minister, last year backed a plan that would have forced Sir Leon to have cleared many of his anti-trust manoeuvres with Martin Bangemann, the industry commissioner, but it was this initiative that was defeated in the commission this week.

France and Italy both accused Sir Leon of wrecking the interests of European industry last October when he blocked the bid by ATR, the Franco-Italian plane maker, for De Havilland of Canada, and the French government clearly refuses to let the matter rest.

The Court of Justice normally takes at least two years to consider such appeals. In the case of the competition information exchange, France argues that Sir Leon has no right to make deals unilaterally with third countries; the argument against the new accounts procedure is that it discriminates between public and private companies, which according to the Treaty of Rome should be treated equally in competition cases.

Sir Leon argues both the new accounting and information arrangements fall within his remit; ominously for France, earlier this week he received backing for his

Inland revenue to pay back tax

By LINDSAY COOK, MONEY EDITOR

THE Inland Revenue has set about tracing more than 7 million people who are paying tax unnecessarily.

They are non-taxpayers who have not registered for interest on their savings to be paid gross.

The Inland Revenue is launching a £500,000 advertising campaign this weekend to encourage savers to claim back tax deducted from their interest or the dividends paid on shares and unit trusts.

To help people to make applications simply and quickly, all tax refund offices will be manned from 8 am to 8 pm seven days a week from Sunday to deal with free-phone calls from investors who believe they are affected.

BT will connect people with their local tax office if they telephone 0800 66 0800.

Most of the people who qualify for refunds are children, pensioners and wives who are not in paid employment. Since last April, they have been able to register savings accounts for gross payment of interest.

So far, 13 million accounts are receiving interest without deduction of interest. This probably accounts for half of the accounts held by the 15 million non-taxpayer savers, according to Francis Maude, the financial secretary to the Treasury, who launched the Taxback scheme yesterday.

Children and pensioners may only be owed a few pounds each, said Mr Maude. Others could be owed hundreds of pounds.

Cathay chief takes the controls at Dan-Air

By HARVEY ELLIOTT, AIR CORRESPONDENT



Olsen: tough job

JOHN Olsen, the European general manager of Cathay Pacific, who has been with the Hong Kong-based long-haul airline for 25 years, is to take over the day-to-day running of Dan-Air.

Mr Olsen will take over as group chief executive in April and, according to David James, Dan-Air's chairman, will be "riding into where the gunfire is thickest". Dan-Air is facing what many within the aviation and travel industry regard as its most critical year.

Mr James put together a financial restructuring last year that pulled the group back from the brink of collapse, and outlined a business strategy that would turn the struggling airline into profit within the next three years. The plan relied on the appointment of

a chief executive who would be able to push through the structural changes.

Although Mr Olsen, aged 49, has had only limited experience of short-haul scheduled operations or of charter flights, his success in developing Cathay's high-quality reputation among European travellers won him what could prove to be one of the toughest jobs in the British aviation industry.

Mr James, who had originally said he would give up his involvement with Dan-Air once a new chief executive was appointed but who has now agreed to stay on as chairman, said last night that Mr Olsen's experience in yield management and marketing would help to push Dan-Air upmarket. Over the

past 12 months, Dan-Air has switched its focus from charter to scheduled flights by increasing the number of aircraft dedicated to a growing number of scheduled routes and reducing the number available for charter. This has meant that it has been able to keep its charter rates high as supply has hardly kept pace with demand. Mr James said: "For the first time in our lives we are in the driving seat."

On scheduled routes, with in Europe, however, he admitted that competition was fierce. "I accept that the gunfire is thickest and some areas are outside our control."

Passenger traffic, he said, was generally assumed to grow at double the rate of

gross domestic product and many of his forecasts had been based upon that assumption. "We have no reason to alter our forecast for what we would achieve during 1991, but for 1992 much depends on market growth, which is outside our control."

Mr Olsen said that when he joined Cathay it had been considered a short-haul airline operating services to the Asian region. "I am going to this job fresh but not without experience," he said. "It would be premature for me to say what we will be concentrating on. I need to learn about the business, understand it and achieve a balance between the scheduled and charter operations. Most important of all, I must make sure that we remain viable."

National Westminster Bank Interest Rates

National Westminster Bank announces the following interest rates, effective from 7 February 1992:

Savings			
Net Interest per annum	Gross Interest per annum	Gross C.A.R.†	
Crown Reserve 3 Months' notice			
7.31%	£25,000 and above	9.75%	10.11%
7.13%	£10,000 - £24,999	9.50%	9.84%
6.84%	£2,000 - £9,999	9.125%	9.44%
Premium Reserve Instant Access			
6.94%	£25,000 and above	9.25%	9.58%
6.75%	£10,000 - £24,999	9.00%	9.31%
6.47%	£2,000 - £9,999	8.625%	8.91%
Special Reserve Instant Access			
5.44%	£25,000 and above	7.25%	7.45%
5.06%	£10,000 - £24,999	6.75%	6.92%
4.97%	£2,000 - £9,999	6.625%	6.79%
4.59%	£500 - £1,999	6.125%	6.27%
First Reserve Instant Access			
4.88%	£1,000 and above	6.50%	6.66%
4.50%	£500 - £999	6.00%	6.14%
4.13%	£250 - £499	5.50%	5.61%
3.75%	£100 - £249	5.00%	5.09%
3.38%	£50 - £99	4.50%	4.58%

* Where appropriate, Basic Rate Tax will be deducted from interest credited or paid (which may be reclaimed by resident non-taxpayers). Subject to the required registration form, interest will be paid gross.

† Gross Compounded Annual Rate (C.A.R.) is the true annual return on your savings if the interest payments are retained in the account.

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BTR Warrants 1009/96	55	-2	-40 Stupp Int 124p	120 1/2	+ 1/4
Capital Industries Inc	63	...	Seaford Resources (60)	55	...
Entex Preferred Capital (100)	99	...	RIGHTS ISSUES		
Fleming Japanese Warrants	36	+2	BM Group 10p N/P (135)	73	-6
Latin Amer Inc & Ap (10/4)	111 1/4	+ 1/2	Clairon Foods N/P (60)	27-15	...
Mutualtrust Warrants	0	...	Hi-Tec Sports N/P (150)	24	...
River & Merc Inc 12c 104	104	+ 1/4	Whelan N/P (100)	24	...

MAJOR CHANGES

FIRE:		Lloyds Abbey	389p (-14p)
Standard Chartered	420p (+9p)	Woolsey	413p (-4p)
Merita	684p (+8p)	Vickers	768p (-10p)
CS Holdings	219p (+9p)	Hammerson	500p (-17p)
Mital	54p (+1p)	Barrat	212p (-2p)
Panger	403p (+15p)	SABreweries	513p (-37p)
QinetiQ	385p (+8p)	Cable Wireless	580p (-13p)
BOC	648p (+10p)	Braxton Hill	544p (-14p)
Johnson Matthey	359p (+9p)	Globe	524p (-18p)
		Incapac	423p (-3p)
Kwik Save	54p (-32p)	Closing Prices... Page 25	
Dorothy's Life	639p (-28p)		

Forgetting the bid essentials

The hostile assault on James Wilkes by Petrocon was hardly a clash of corporate titans. But interest has been quickened by a swift and firm slap on the wrist by the Takeover Panel for all three corporate finance advisers then involved, including N M Rothschild, one of the City's blue-blooded merchant banks. Some discreet advance canvassing has become an accepted practice, to establish if there is even minimal support for a mooted takeover bid. In an excess of zeal Henry Cooke Corporate Finance and Smith New Court Corporate Finance went considerably further. Their claim of 30 per cent verbal support by Monday, when Petrocon's bid was finally announced, suggests that, allowing for a few dissenting voices, a sizeable chunk of the share register must have been in on the secret.

There are no prizes for guessing what the share price did next, and it is up to the Stock Exchange's insider dealing unit to decide if there were suspicious share dealings and if so, what action to take next. The panel has ruled that the two securities houses, which should have been particularly careful in such circumstances, breached the code by not consulting panel executives; they are duly criticised. Rothschild, because of what looks like a logistical problem, then failed to put out an announcement of the breakdown of talks between the two parties until the share price had shot ahead further, although the bank takes less of a caning from the panel.

Smith New Court and Henry Cooke still appear to be learning in such bid advice and should have done their homework better. As for Rothschild, it is tempting to wonder if takeovers are becoming so rare that even hardened professionals have forgotten what they are supposed to be doing. Clients and shareholders deserve better. Professionals should reacquire themselves with the rulebook.

Thank you Lloyds

Forwell Group's collapse is a reminder of how easily the sensitive relationship between a company and its bank can degenerate into open warfare. Forwell's management blames Lloyds Bank for the company's failure, because Lloyds insisted that it reduce its debts and failed to support a rescue plan. Lloyds in turn believes it did everything it could to save the company, but was ultimately forced to call in its £1.4 million loan to protect its shareholders and depositors, although this precipitated the collapse.

Similar disputes are occurring across the country, resulting in receiverships, liquidations, job losses and losses to banks. In an increasing number of bigger cases, banks move Heaven and Earth to rescue a troubled company which has a viable core business. Most of the time they shrink from continuing high-risk capital to troubled businesses and feel obliged to call in their loans.

What makes Lloyds' behaviour in this case disgraceful are the letters sent to two of Forwell's staff on January 27, while it was still trying to formulate a rescue plan. These said the company was bankrupt. The mistake stemmed from a misunderstanding in one of Lloyds' branches and the bank has apologised. But these irresponsible letters shattered morale in Forwell's offices and effectively killed any hope of deliverance.

Almost 50,000 companies went into receivership or liquidation in Britain last year, with devastating effects on the banks' balance sheets. The banks need to treat surviving businesses with care, for their own sakes as well as the economy's.

Cresson takes the bull by the horns in picking IBM as France's partner

The Bull-IBM deal was a nimble piece of business and political footwork by the French prime minister, argues Wolfgang Münchau

There used to be a saying in the computer industry that "nobody ever got fired for choosing IBM". Edith Cresson, the French prime minister, must have remembered that when she chose IBM, and not Hewlett-Packard, the apparent front-runner, as a strategic partner for Groupe Bull, the French state-owned computer maker.

The deal, under which IBM takes a stake in the electronics group, amounts to a rare coup for the stumbling Cresson government, despite widespread and justified doubts about her ambitious industrial policy, and especially her seemingly quixotic quest to sort out the mess in which the French state-owned electronics industry has landed itself. A genuinely good business deal always serves more than one purpose, and this appears to be so with the latest Bull deal.

For IBM, the big attraction is the prospect of gaining access to the lucrative government procurement market. There also exists at present a tough battle between various computer standards, and it is crucial for IBM to lure as many competitors as possible into its own technological camp. In return for these benefits, IBM was prepared to be generous. It will invest about \$100 million, perhaps more, for a stake in Bull of between 5 and 10 per cent, but for IBM this is only a token gesture to show "commitment".

For Bull the deal brings access to IBM's second-generation technology, technology it failed to develop in the Eighties, and which it now has no chance of catching up on without outside help. Mme Cresson, true to age-old Gallic fears of the East, was notably snippy about an earlier deal to bring in Japan's NEC as a shareholder.

For her government, the latest move, along with a host of others involving IBM, Apple Computer, Hewlett-Packard, and SGS Thomson, the Franco-Italian computer maker, is the second most important step in the restructuring of France's electronics industry. The first reshuffle came in December with the announced merger of the Thomson electronics group and the state-owned nuclear energy group into a giant holding company to be called Thomson-CSA.

Mme Cresson's decision to choose a private-sector partner, and especially IBM, rather than Hewlett-Packard — which, according to some industry insiders, would have offered a technologically superior deal — shows French industrial policy at its most Machiavellian, not



No more chauvinists: Edith Cresson and Francis Lorentz are happy to choose IBM

least because of the European dimension.

For Sir Leon Brittan, the European competition commissioner, it might have more frustrating implications. Sir Leon is looking at a promised Fr6.6 billion French government package, made up of new capital and research subsidies, aimed at helping Bull to escape its predicament. He is no friend of French state subsidies, and this deal will make it harder for him to raise objections against what many people in the industry would regard as an unfair state subsidy.

The commission uses the private-investor test as a benchmark for its decisions: if a private investor — IBM in this case — participates in a capital increase, then, so the argument goes, the action must be justified on commercial grounds and does not constitute a hidden subsidy. The commission would find it very difficult to prove that the French government is subsidising Bull, even if superficially this appears to be the case.

For the rest of Europe, the deal marks an end to hopes — or fears — that there exists a wholly indigenous European solution to the difficulties of the sector.

Siemens ridiculed the European idea from the outset, and announced last year that it has struck a

deal with IBM over the joint production of a 16-megabit chip. An agreement to develop a 64-megabit chip had already been in place.

The change in French attitudes towards so-called European solutions is subtle, though unmistakable. Francis Lorentz, chairman of Bull, said that last year he had proposed to Carlo De Benedetti, president of Olivetti, and to Siemens, of Germany, a joint venture company aimed at exploiting the upper and most profitable segment of the market. "But nothing happened," he said.

I may be, M Lorentz believes, that we have the wrong idea about what is meant by European industry. "European means to have one or several decision centres based in Europe... to develop European competence... to have high value-added business," he said. "To do that, you need research centres. All of us have to work closely with the Americans and the Japanese. However, if the decision centre is moving from one country to another, the companies will not have the same value-added, and the same know-how base."

The bottom line for M Lorentz is ownership. European means majority owned by Europeans. Hence, he argues that "ICL has become Japa-

nese. That is not my problem. I like the people, they do good work. But they can't say they are Europeans."

All these events occur against a backdrop of severe difficulties for the whole industry. Excepting ICL, none of the indigenous European computer companies is making any money. Last year, computer sales were down by 7.8 per cent worldwide, according to Dataquest, an American consultancy. Why that should be so is not quite as obvious as it seems. The recession, the usual excuse for failure, can at best offer a partial explanation. The computer industry has also become a victim of its own technological success. The market may have grown strongly throughout the Eighties, but the growth of technology has outstripped demand, and costs, especially research and development, have escalated.

In other industries this would have led to concentration. Not so here. The computer industry might be one of the most competitive, but it is also one of the least hostile. The approach is co-operative, at least on the surface. Of all the computer makers, there is nobody more expert at this game than IBM.

Signor De Benedetti said this week that he, too, had been approached by IBM, but he rejected IBM's plans, which he considers a

"Trojan horse" strategy. The wider fear is that IBM might behave like a computer virus, which starts unnoticed, ending up corrupting and destroying the entire system.

Whatever the merits of these alliances, companies such as Bull often have little choice. From Bull's point of view, the most important aspect of this alliance is not the symbolic equity injection, but the cost-saving to be realised through joint production and, by far the most important, the access to IBM's second-generation technology, used mainly in workstations — the only growing segment of the market. These workstations are based on a technology that goes by the name of Risc, or reduced instruction set computing, a technique that uses fewer instructions to a microprocessor, thereby speeding up the performance of a computer.

Bull has failed to develop its own Risc technology, and has instead opted for a Risc technology based on the widely available Mips chip, which is supported by the Advanced Computing Environment (ACE), a consortium of over 40 computer makers. This consortium includes Bull, but not IBM, HP or Apple.

In commercial terms, the difference between these systems is that IBM's or HP's proprietary Risc technology is more "up-market" than that of Mips in that it is expected to command higher profit margins. Both IBM and HP are developing their own technology, but there exists a body of opinion which holds that HP's Risc technology is superior to IBM's. HP has another advantage in that its market share of workstations in Europe is greater than that of IBM.

For Bull, however, the IBM deal offers additional attractions, not least the opportunity to participate in the most strategic of alliances yet struck in this industry: the co-operation deal struck last year between IBM, Motorola, the chip maker, and Apple, IBM's erstwhile arch-rival and now apparently one of its closest allies.

From these considerations, one might conclude that competition in this industry is not merely between companies, but between groups of companies that share technologies, and that the make-up of such alliances is prone to change.

Michael Armstrong, head of IBM's international trade business, said that no single company, however big, has the resources to go it alone. IBM recognised this trend some time ago yet it remains the world's largest, and also Europe's largest, computer maker, despite its much-reported financial problems. In Britain alone, the company has a turnover of £4 billion, dwarfing anybody else.

Most important, the IBM-Bull alliance is a welcome departure from old-fashioned French industrial policy, which has finally recognised that even the Paris version of Buro-chauvinism has its limits.

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Murray to mint it for Hill

AFTER a year of sackings and financial woe, Hill Samuel, the TSB's merchant banking arm, finally seems to be getting things right. It has found a new vice-chairman in Murray Stuart, deputy chairman of the Audit Commission and one of Britain's most able business leaders. Stuart, who stepped down as chief executive of Berisford International in December and is a past chairman of MB Group, takes up his new role on February 18 and plans to devote a third of his time to Hill Samuel's affairs. In particular he will be helping Richard Heley, head of corporate finance, drum up some new business — something the bank could use after crashing to a loss of £419 million in the year to October 1991, the worst such fall in British merchant banking history. Lack of money was not in evidence when Hill Samuel held its annual dinner for financial editors in London last night. The site chosen for the feast was Spencer House, ancestral home of the Princess of Wales, and a venue that does not come cheap.

Deals on wheels

COULD it really be a year and a half since the European Commission's answer to meals on wheels, the mobile information unit or MIU, was unveiled in a blaze of publicity outside Westminster? The MIU, little more than a caravan stocked with electronic gadgets and linked to Brussels by satellite, set out on a gospel-like mission to explain the single market to unsuspecting villagers in the north of England. Even though representatives of the



trade and industry department and Foreign Office were at Westminster to see the van, sponsored by Ernst & Young, the accountant, on its way — it escaped being wheel-clamped, to the disappointment of photographers present — nothing was subsequently heard of it... until now, that is. It seems that the Law Society has dragged the van back out of obscurity to appear in a series of roadshows planned for March and April. Solicitors, it says, will be able to learn about dealing with the EC and the single market. Can't wait.

Far-sighted

TIM Sainsbury, minister for trade, has discovered a novel use for the Canary Wharf skyscraper in London's Docklands. His new office on Victoria Street, just across the road from the local Sainsbury branch, commands a panoramic view of London's landmarks, including the distinctive Canary Wharf obelisk. It seems that he finds the monument to Olympia & York's enterprise very useful for judging the quality of air in the capital. Indeed, the presence of smog may have dire consequences for his dialogue with the captains of British

Industry. For he jokingly suggests starting a semaphore network to communicate with other high risers such as John Banham, the CBI director general, whose Centre Point headquarters is well in the sights of the DTI.

Industry. For he jokingly suggests starting a semaphore network to communicate with other high risers such as John Banham, the CBI director general, whose Centre Point headquarters is well in the sights of the DTI.

Glass winners

LALIQUE, the French family-owned crystal company with headquarters in Paris's Rue Royale, has struck a deal with the organisers of the Winter Olympics, which open in Albertville tomorrow. Not only is it providing the games with the 330 medals to be distributed during the two-week event but has broken with Olympic tradition by making them out of crystal. The new-style medals are engraved with a mountain perspective and fringed by gold, silver or bronze. Lalique will not disclose the quantity of fine gold and pure silver used, the price per medal struck with the Olympic Committee, or details of its annual financial results. But the deal cannot hurt profits at the company, which relies on exports for 80 per cent of its earnings, employs 600 people and has shops in London, Frankfurt, New York, Singapore, Hong Kong and Osaka.

Irons out

The high level of redundancies at BP — where 3,000 jobs are to go this year — has led to the revival of an old joke that did the rounds in the City after the 1987 stock market crash when jobs were being lost left, right and centre. Question: What do you call an optimist at BP? Answer: Someone who keeps five shirts in their cupboard on Sunday.

JON ASHWORTH

British Gas's conservation trust needs a political will to drive it

From the Director of the Association for the Conservation of Energy

Sir, The announcement (Business News, February 5) that British Gas is to set up a trust, to finance installation of £120 million p.a. worth of energy conservation measures into its customers' homes and offices, is welcome. It is made doubly so by the knowledge that the regulatory body, Ofgas, may be prepared to offer the company financial incentives to ensure the trust's success. Without these, there is every danger of such initiatives declining into mere public relations gestures, intended to encourage fuel switching rather than energy saving. It is the profligate use of fossil fuels which has led to the world's most pressing environmental threat, global warming. Numerous studies

Prophet and loss

From Mr Joshua Vannack

Sir, Valuing intangibles on extrapolated past results is neither prudent nor cautious. In the future, when reported losses occur, investors and bankers will have the added alarm of sudden write-downs in intangible assets. Surely this is a "fair weather" concept which imprudently ignores the downside "storm" scenario. To conclude: predictions into the future really belong in the chairman's and directors' reports. Auditors quite rightly prophesy that a company is a "going concern" into the short-term future, but prophecy is not an exact science and does not deserve the credibility of a place in the balance sheet.

Yours faithfully,
JOSHUA VANNACK,
69 Barrons Way,
Comberton,
Cambridge.

have demonstrated the potential for the developed world drastically to reduce energy consumption by improving efficiency, whilst still improving living standards. All that is required to achieve this is sufficient political will, together with appropriate incentives for the purveyors of pollution to assist in the process.

For the first time in Britain, we now have the potential to introduce such incentives. Both Ofgas and British Gas are to be congratulated upon their achievements. All that remains is to ensure that there is sufficient political will behind the trust to ensure that it succeeds.

Yours faithfully,

ANDREW WARREN,

Director,

Association for the

Conservation of Energy,

9 Sherlock Mews, W1.

Shares and power

From Major R.N.B. Freeman

Sir, A number of letters from your readers over the last few weeks has emphasised the powerlessness of the private shareholder.

Surely what is needed from the prime minister is a private shareholders' charter. After all, he has encouraged us to go into Peps, where we have to pay to vote on the shares we hold, and into pension plans, where we get no vote at all.

It appears the Conservatives have encouraged a powerless shareholding democracy. You gave the people the shares, now give them the power! Yours faithfully,

MAJOR R.N.B. FREEMAN,
34 Whitelands Avenue,
Chorleywood,
Buckinghamshire.

NEW RATES FROM THE CHESHIRE FOR ACCOUNTS NO LONGER AVAILABLE TO NEW INVESTORS.

INTEREST RATES FROM 7TH FEBRUARY 1992

	INTEREST PAID	GROSS RATE	NET RATE		INTEREST PAID	GROSS RATE	NET RATE
BONUS 91 - MATURITY ISSUE				CHAMPION BOND			
£2,500+ (with 4% gross guaranteed bonus)	Annually	9.80%	7.85%	(2nd Issue)	Annually	6.17%	4.63%
£25,000+ (with 5% gross guaranteed bonus)	Annually	10.80%	8.10%	CHAMPION BOND			
				(3rd Issue)	Annually	7.57%	5.68%
PREMIUM INCOME				FLEXIBLE FUND			
£5,000+	Monthly	8.75%	6.56%	£1+	Half	5.70%	4.28%
£10,000+	Monthly	9.25%	6.94%	£25,000+	Yearly	6.37%	4.78%
£25,000+	Monthly	9.75%	7.31%	THRIFT SAVERS			
					Annually	5.50%	4.13%
CAPITAL PLUS SPECIAL ISSUE				DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS			
£10,000+	Annually	8.63%	6.47%	Half			
£25,000+	Annually	9.17%	6.88%	Yearly	3.50%	2.63%	
CAPITAL PLUS				DEPOSIT			
	Annually	7.70%	5.78%	- Company Accounts	Half	3.37%	2.53%
				- Gross Accounts	Yearly	8.45%	---
CAPITAL PLUS				ORDINARY SHARE			
	Monthly	7.70%	5.78%	Half			
				Yearly	2.25%	1.69%	
SUPERSHARE PLUS							
£1+	Annually	4.80%	3.60%				
£500+	Annually	7.65%	5.74%				
£5,000+	Annually	8.05%	6.04%				
£10,000+	Annually	8.20%	6.15%				
£30,000+	Annually	8.45%	6.34%				
£2,000+	Monthly	7.89%	5.54%				
£5,000+	Monthly	7.77%	5.83%				
£10,000+	Monthly	7.91%	5.93%				
£30,000+	Monthly	8.14%	6.11%				

The gross rates of interest on all other closed accounts will be reduced by 0.75%. Annual interest is payable on 31st December and half yearly interest is payable on 30th June and 31st December. Interest will be payable net of basic rate income tax (currently 25%) which may be reclaimed by non taxpayers) or subject to the required certification can be paid gross. Rates may vary - withdrawals subject to branch

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CHESHIRE BUILDING SOCIETY

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KYOSHI WATANO, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF ALPS ELECTRIC (UK) LTD.

How I got where I am today

Kyoshi Watano is a board member of Alps, a \$3 billion global electronics firm. He also heads a United Kingdom workforce of over 600 people manufacturing and exporting high technology electronic components to customers throughout Europe. How did he get where he is today? He successfully developed his manufacturing operations in a city with the most advanced telecommunications in Britain. Where European markets are easily reached by rail, air and sea. And where 25 million people live within a 2 hour drive. If you'd like your company to get somewhere, ring Bob Hill, Commercial Director Milton Keynes Development Corporation, on (0908) 692692.

MILTON KEYNES

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Ally Nat 1,800	Countryside 446	MEPC 260	Saturday 1,700	New York (midday)	Brunswick	FT-SE 100	Period	Open	High	Low	Close	Volume
Alli-Gen 2,500	Euromet U 359	Marine Star 4,700	Sax & New 715	Dow Jones 3261.63 (+0.3)	General 5813.12 (+18.12)	Previous open interest: 3994	Mar 91	2594.0	2585.0	2550.0	2580.0	7985
Anglian W 1,100	Exxon U 380	Midland Bk 7,000	Sax Power 2,400	SAC Composite 4114.14 (+0.30)	Paris CAC 5024.46 (+0.91)	Three Month Sterling	Mar 91	99.45	99.45	99.42	99.47	24335
Anglii Gap 2,100	Finra 1,600	NatWest Bk 3,500	Over Tenn 1,400	Telco: Nickels Avy 22104.92 (+168.55)	Zachex: SKA Gen 466.5 (-0.8)	Previous open interest: 20246	Jun 92	99.98	99.08	99.96	99.01	9384
ASDA 34 8	Gen 1,500	NatWest Bk 3,500	Over Tenn 1,400	Hong Kong: Hang Seng Closed	London: FT A All-Share 1213.83 (-5.00)	Three Month Eurodollar	Mar 91	99.39	99.39	99.38	99.39	2274
ASDA 34 8	Gen 1,500	NatWest Bk 3,500	Over Tenn 1,400	Hong Kong: Hang Seng Closed	FT 500 1367.40 (+5.58)	Previous open interest: 22771	Jun 92	99.98	99.08	99.96	99.01	17643
ASDA 34 8	Gen 1,500	NatWest Bk 3,500	Over Tenn 1,400	Hong Kong: Hang Seng Closed	FT Gold-Shares 145.2 (-0.1)	US Treasury Bond	Mar 91	101.34	101.25	101.13	101.20	2468
ASDA 34 8	Gen 1,500	NatWest Bk 3,500	Over Tenn 1,400	Hong Kong: Hang Seng Closed	FT Fixed Interest 100.99 (same)	Previous open interest: 6144	Jun 92	99.98	99.08	99.96	99.01	348
ASDA 34 8	Gen 1,500	NatWest Bk 3,500	Over Tenn 1,400	Hong Kong: Hang Seng Closed	FT Govt Secs 88.10 (-0.13)	Japanese Govt Bond	Mar 91	102.31	102.31	102.31	102.31	4783
ASDA 34 8	Gen 1,500	NatWest Bk 3,500	Over Tenn 1,400	Hong Kong: Hang Seng Closed	Bargains 31091	Previous open interest: 113510	Jun 92	99.98	99.08	99.96	99.01	700
ASDA 34 8	Gen 1,500	NatWest Bk 3,500	Over Tenn 1,400	Hong Kong: Hang Seng Closed	SEAQ Volume 546.2M	Three month ECU	Mar 91	99.45	99.45	99.45	99.45	538
ASDA 34 8	Gen 1,500	NatWest Bk 3,500	Over Tenn 1,400	Hong Kong: Hang Seng Closed	USM (Datastream) 141.34 (-0.42)	Previous open interest: 7949	Jun 92	99.45	99.45	99.45	99.45	538
ASDA 34 8	Gen 1,500	NatWest Bk 3,500	Over Tenn 1,400	Hong Kong: Hang Seng Closed		Reuro Swiss Franc	Mar 91	92.56	92.56	92.52	92.59	2285
ASDA 34 8	Gen 1,500	NatWest Bk 3,500	Over Tenn 1,400	Hong Kong: Hang Seng Closed		Previous open interest: 3857	Jun 92	92.77	92.77	92.76	92.76	2626
ASDA 34 8	Gen 1,500	NatWest Bk 3,500	Over Tenn 1,400	Hong Kong: Hang Seng Closed		Italian Lira	Mar 91	92.56	92.56	92.52	92.59	2285
ASDA 34 8	Gen 1,500	NatWest Bk 3,500	Over Tenn 1,400	Hong Kong: Hang Seng Closed		Previous open interest: 2139	Jun 92	92.57	92.57	92.56	92.56	672

What price help on the move?

Women would feel more secure with a portable telephone, especially when driving alone. A recent Gallup survey for Motorola claims that 73 per cent of people feel safer when carrying a cellular telephone. For women the figure is 97 per cent. Half those interviewed said that when driving alone they had experienced an incident in which a cellular telephone would have helped.

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust has introduced a scheme to provide mobile communications at concessionary subscription rates for use in emergencies, and the Automobile Association has similar plans to help drivers who feel themselves at risk.

Other research also indicates there is a tremendous suppressed demand for mobile telephones — suppressed because of the cost.

The price of the telephones is no longer the hurdle it once was, but subscription costs are prohibitive. An adequate hand portable can cost less than £200 and the price of car telephones is even lower.

A top-range model, however, can still be expensive. Motorola's pocket phone to be announced soon will cost more than £600.

Nor is the cost of the calls a deterrent: these range from a peak 33p a minute within the greater London area down to the cheap rate of 10p a minute.

Many potential customers are being held back by an annual subscription fee of £300, plus VAT. These charges are specified by the two cellular telephone operators, Celinet and Vodafone. The total bill for an average Celinet customer, for example, is £60 a month.

Customers cannot deal directly with either operator but must use one of about 60 airtime retailers, who act as intermediaries. Although these retailers may vary some of the charges, prices are unlikely to be any cheaper on average and, may, well, be higher.

The eventual answer is likely to be personal

The cost of mobile phones is inhibiting use in areas of urgent demand. Matthew May reports

communications networks (PCNs) — a new type of system expected to provide mobile telephones for about half the cost of the present cellular network telephones, although none of those planning services will comment on what price levels they expect to set.

In a recent survey by one of three companies planning to launch a PCN, United gave 400 people, both ordinary householders and small businesses, a hand portable connected to the existing cellular networks but charged them as if they were using a PCN.

The conclusion was that if mobile telephones were available at that price tomorrow, they would attract at least two

million more users to the existing 1.3 million who use the cellular networks.

Unitel promises it will have a PCN ready to start by mid 1993 that could reach 25 per cent of the population and is likely to cover the area inside the M25, London's orbital motorway. Some telecommunications experts, however, doubt that anything more than a pilot service will be in operation before 1995.

PCNs require investment of more than £1 billion, and both the recession and the disastrous failure of Teletel, which was meant to provide Britain with a world first in cheap mobile telephones, have made the industry more cautious.

In October, Phonepoint, the last of the three teletel services, was switched off. It had attracted only 800 users and like the other services was hampered by being unable to take incoming calls and by the need for customers to be within 100 yards of a base station before the telephone could be used.

Only one licensed operator, Hutchinson Personal Communications, is still planning a teletel network and hoping to overcome the problem of teletel phones being unable to receive calls by linking them to a pager. The system, however, will still require users to be in range of a base station.

Last week the AA announced plans for an emergency-only telephone that operates over the Vodafone cellular network and plugs into a car's cigarette lighter. The telephone can be used only to call either the AA for roadside assistance or the emergency services.

The AA says the new service should be available by the summer.

The cost is still high, however. The unit will be about £200, plus a rental of £10 a month, and although calls will be free it is hoped there will be few of them.

His looks poor value compared with a scheme being run by one airline retailer, Ford Cellular, in association with Motorola and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust.

The scheme, described as a personal safety package, reworks the usual charges for mobile telephones to appeal to those who want a mobile phone largely as a precaution against the unexpected and are less concerned about call charges.

The monthly subscription is reduced from £25 to £10 but call charges increase to a standard 33p a minute with no cheap rate.

The offer is open to anybody who buys a Motorola telephone through Ford Cellular. These range from a car telephone at £150, a hand portable at £269 or a pocket telephone at £400.



Warm tones: women feel safer with mobile phones



The soul of tact: Basil Fawley (John Cleese) might benefit from computer lessons in handling rude customers

There's a fly in my software

A computer program trains waiters by simulating restaurant complaints

Does your computer make rude remarks to you? While manufacturers struggle to make their machines more user-friendly, Richard Margetts, a catering lecturer at Granville College, in Yorkshire, has developed a program that positively encourages the computer to be nasty towards its operator.

The software, called Custom, has been funded by the employment department's learning technologies unit, and is designed to help hotel and catering trainees to cope with customers' complaints. Such complaints can make or break a business.

The idea for the program grew out of an unpleasant evening. Mr Margetts and his wife had at a hotel. In a scene that could have come from *Fawlty Towers*, the BBC television comedy series, the couple were left standing in the hotel lobby while the receptionist continued making a personal telephone call.

During the meal they were ignored by the waiter and had to order their drinks at the bar and carry them back to the table. The couple complained to the manager who sympathised but said it

was difficult to train staff in customer care.

"Britons are very complacent about complaints," says Mr Margetts, who used to run his own restaurant. "Good service is not seen as being very important."

Hence the computer-based training package. The first part analyses how complaints arise. The complaints include those from the few customers who go to a restaurant determined to make a fuss, perhaps in the hope of a free meal.

Mr Margetts says: "Within the program we have included ways of spotting those complaints, and those that can arise because of a bad experience, somebody has had even before entering the restaurant."

The program will also

identify the complaints that can occasionally arise merely from customer boredom. Somebody may have decided he cannot stand his dining companion, for example, and takes his unhappiness out on the food or the unfortunate waiter.

The waiters assemble a customer profile. "How am I dressed — shabby, average or immaculate?" the computer asks. "Is my accent local or non-local? Do I speak perfect English or might I be a tourist? Am I alone or with a group? Is it a mixed-sex group? What is my age bracket? How much alcohol do I seem to have drunk?"

The computer then suggests successful ways of tackling the customer.

Mr Margetts says: "The idea is that the trainee sees

that personal attributes such as accent or dress are a weak indicator of how a customer will respond during a complaint, whereas attitude and alcohol are much stronger."

In the second part of the program, the computer becomes less than friendly. The trainee takes part in role-play simulations in which the computer acts like a complaining customer.

The computer can be programmed to be angry, rude, reasonable or rambling. The trainee's task is to recognise the warning signs and calm the situation.

At the end of a session, trainees are told how many attempts it has taken to reach the correct response. The results are saved for the course tutor to read.

But although the program uses graphics and text to good effect, it cannot yet convey complex factors such as the customer's tone of voice, body posture or facial expression. Future versions may use video pictures and sound for greater realism.

However, Mr Margetts says there are no plans to incorporate a robot arm that grabs the user by the lapels.

GEORGE COLE

News of your choice

A device that will automatically sift and select items of interest from the masses of information broadcast daily by television and teletext has been developed by British electronics engineers.

Micro Eye TVI will allow users, from business people and researchers to journalists and hobbyists, to make more efficient use of the air waves. The device, a decoder or intelligent card, is the brainchild of engineers at Digithurst, a company in Royston, Hertfordshire.

For capturing pages of teletext, users program the card to search for words, or a series of words, relating to topics of interest. The system then scans the pages for the trigger words, which, if spotted, are downloaded into the decoder. Up to 255 pages can be collected at a time.

Meanwhile, an alert is triggered on the user's per-

A new device will sift information from television and teletext

sonal computer and appears in a small window on one side of the screen. This allows a user to scan the pages the card has selected before either discarding or transferring some into the computer, depending on their suitability.

Peter Kruger, Digithurst's managing director, says: "It can also be programmed to take a few pages that you know always carry, say, business news or politics."

The technique for automatically recording television programmes that feature items of interest works in a similar way. The decoder comes with an infra-red set, allowing the card to be programmed by a video recorder's own handset.

Effectively the card is taught the features of the

video recorder, such as play, fast forward, record and channel selection by the video's handset. Once this has been done, the card can be programmed to scan for television broadcasts that mention up to 100 key words.

Mr Kruger says: "Some people might program in the words 'fish' or 'water pollution' because they are interested in marine life. Others may be interested in gardening and might program in 'flowers, floral, tree' or even 'Dutch end disease'."

The decoder can be programmed to switch off after a set time and switch to standby, ready to record when the next interesting word is broadcast. It can also be programmed to stop recording a programme if a key

word is not mentioned again after a certain length of time.

Use of the device, which costs £495 including its software, is limited to broadcasts that carry Ceefax subtitles.

Only a small proportion of broadcasts, such as the news, carry subtitles, but the level is likely to increase in the coming years.

Mr Kruger says the company, which will show Micro Eye TVI for the first time at the CeBIT computer fair in Hannover next month, had considered developing a decoder that could be triggered by key spoken words.

"We do not believe you can make a practical product at the moment," he says. "With teletext, words come up that do not rely on inflections of speech or people coughing in the middle of sentences. However, it will happen in a matter of a few years."

NICK NUTTALL

Cheaper picture

The price of high definition television sets has tumbled since Sharp announced that in May it will sell a 36in HDTV set in Japan for £4,500, almost a quarter of the present price.

The usual price, about £17,000, has effectively limited sales to business and hotels. HDTV programmes, whose crystal-clear pictures match the quality of cinema film, are now broadcast in Japan for eight hours a day. Sharp says the price cut has been achieved by reducing the number of chips used in each set. The new set also has a cathode ray tube that is cheaper to manufacture but sacrifices some clarity.

Manufacturers are hoping

Bank check

the Barcelona Olympics this summer will stimulate sales because big sporting events are good at showing the benefits of high-definition pictures.

Analysts believe the market will not take off, however, until prices fall below £2,000.

Banknotes in Belgium may carry a code to prevent photocopying. The quality of the latest colour photocopyers is so good that forgers are often forsaking more conventional methods of counterfeiting.

The Belgian central bank told *De Standaard* that it is negotiating with manufacturers to include a device in photocopyers that will recognise the code and make them seize up.

Fax tracks

People wanting faxes while they are out and about can now receive them from any nearby machine. Inter City Paging has started a service whereby faxes can be sent to a personal fax number, where they are received and stored by a central computer and an alert sent out to the customer by radio pager. The user finds the nearest fax machine and enters a personal retrieval number and the fax is sent.

The service, which Inter City says will work anywhere in the world, will store faxes for up to 72 hours.

Less risk

IBM's decision to buy between 5 and 10 per cent of Groupe Bull, the French computer company, will give it a useful ally in its efforts to

become the standard-seller for the emerging technology of reduced instruction set computing (Risc).

The technology simplifies computer processors, allowing them to run faster and is widely used in desktop workstations, the fastest-growing part of the computer market.

IBM faces fierce competition in this area from Hewlett Packard and Sun Microsystems, over which Risc systems will become the industry standard.

EC steps in

The European Commission wants to give online computer databases throughout the EC copyright protection for ten years by standardising with the sort of protection for systems now used in Denmark and other Scandinavian nations.

The commission is proposing protection not only for written texts but also for statistics, catalogues and other tabulations not yet covered by existing copyright law in many community countries.

The commission says that electronic databases are the library hypermarkets of the future. The databases will contain factual data, as well as literary and other artistic works, which are already protected against illegal copying.

Call for entries to the 1993 Toshiba Year of Invention

Have you got an invention which could change the world? Or even a small part of it? If so, this year's Toshiba Year of Invention is a great chance to turn your ideas into reality — and win a prize at the same time.

Your invention could be something to do with your work, a hobby, or perhaps the result of a project at school or college.

It doesn't matter where your inspiration comes from, and anyone can enter. Previous winners and finalists have come from all walks of life.

This year Toshiba is offering £100,000 worth of prizes. And if you've got an idea that's promising enough we'll even help you with the development costs.

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So complete the coupon today and post to Toshiba Year of Invention, FREEPOST, Blackhorse Road, London SE8 5BP, for full details and an Entry Form.

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NAME _____

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Please tick here the category in which you will be entering:
☐ Individual ☐ School ☐ University/College
☐ Small Business

CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES 8th May 1992

Compacq switch on Lite.

Just announced: COMPACQ LITE Lite/20 and LITE Lite/25 notebooks. Ultra lite and 386SL power, elephant-size disk. Battery-with-brain allows 4 1/2 hours main-free use. Neat expansion base option transforms Lite into desktop heavyweight. Our Holborn laptop centre has full info.

MORSE 78 High Holborn, London WC1, 071-831 0644
 17 Sheen Lane, Mortlake SW14, 081-876 0404

FOOTBALL

Cascarino is ready to sign for Chelsea

By DENNIS SIGNY

CHELSEA will today exchange Tommy Boyd, the Scottish defender they bought from Motherwell for £800,000 last summer, for Tony Cascarino, the Republic of Ireland forward who cost Celtic £1.2 million when he moved from Aston Villa in July. No transfer fee is involved.

Cascarino, aged 29, who played for Gillingham and Millwall before Graham Taylor brought him to Aston Villa for £1.5 million, has scored only four times for Celtic in 28 appearances, many of them as a substitute.

The arrival of Cascarino, who will partner Clive Allen, Chelsea's recent acquisition from Manchester City, raises questions about the future of Kerry Dixon at Stamford Bridge. The former England international, who is only ten goals behind Bobby Tambling's record 202 goals for Chelsea, is out of the side with a heel injury, but, like Cascarino at Celtic, has found goals hard to come by this season. Cascarino will be eligible to play against Sheffield United in the fifth round of the FA Cup next week.

Brady, meanwhile, is happy to have acquired another international for his squad, particularly with Europe in mind for next season. Boyd can play anywhere in the back four or in midfield.

Another Scot moving nearer home is Jim Leighton, who completes a £200,000 move from Manchester United to Dundee today. The goalkeeper, aged 33, who spent a bitter-sweet four years with United said after joining the Scottish first division leaders: "I have joined an ambitious club and look forward to Premier League football next season."

The Aston Villa right back, Chris Price, has rejected his old club, Blackburn Rovers, in a £150,000 deal. Price, who was originally with Hereford, was with Blackburn for three seasons before leaving for Villa three years ago. He is due to play in tomorrow's match at Grimsby.

Wrexham are set to use some of the £150,000 banked from their FA Cup run to buy Brian Carey, a central defender, who has been on loan from Manchester United.

Derby to review their security

By DENNIS SHAW

DERBY County are carrying out an immediate and urgent upgrading of their match security following an incident after the 4-3 FA Cup fourth-round defeat by Aston Villa on Wednesday.

Michael Dunford, the club secretary and general manager, confirmed that a home-supporter had gained entry to the visitors' dressing and had been forcibly ejected.

The episode also carried worrying possible side-effects for Les Sealey, the Aston Villa goalkeeper, who had been involved in a verbal dispute with the supporter.

Although there is no suggestion that Sealey was to blame for the incident, he was certainly involved in an argument with the fan at a time

when the Football Association is about to arrange for his personal hearing to answer a charge of bringing the game into disrepute.

Ron Addison, the Villa manager, said yesterday that as far as he was concerned, the incident was a home-supporter who had gained entry to the visitors' dressing and had been forcibly ejected.

The episode also carried worrying possible side-effects for Les Sealey, the Aston Villa goalkeeper, who had been involved in a verbal dispute with the supporter.

Palace face busy time

THE season has gone sour on Crystal Palace. Wednesday night's defeat in the Rumbelows Cup quarter-final left Steve Coppell's side with little, apparently to play for, but it may still be an eventful time at the club (Peter Ball writes). Problems on and off the field have yet to be resolved.

"With the premier league coming next season, we have to be sure to be in it," he says.

still have to get a few more points to be safe," Coppell said. "But I think that what happens for the rest of this season will have its effect next season." Speculation has it that Palace will release their most prized assets once safety has been achieved. Andy Gray is the only player on the transfer list, but he is one that Coppell would seem to like to stay. "I don't want him to go," he said.



Pointing the way: Wasmeier refers to the leader board after yesterday's run

Wasmeier sets the early pace

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

Val d'Isère: Markus Wasmeier, the winner of one downhill on the World Cup tour this season, had the fastest time in yesterday's first day of training for the Olympic downhill. The German negotiated the steep, twisting "Le Face de Bellevard" in 1min 52.64sec.

Four French skiers were among the top ten but Wasmeier, who won the downhill at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, in Germany, last month, was one of the few skiers who remained in his tuck going through the approaching the finish line. His time was 23 to a second ahead of Guenther Mader, of Austria.

In another French resort, English competitors were angered as controversy continued to dog the Olympics' luge and bobsleigh track.

Organisers were forced to put up shades on several big bends of the La Plagne track to stop the strong sun melting the ice, a problem which some team officials believe will cause headaches when luge races start on Sunday.

The British racer, Nick Overt, was annoyed at having to dip in and out of the covered corners, which are transformed into small tunnels by the white shades, as they are almost certain to be removed on Sunday to improve the view.

"The way it is organised I could face my final four training runs today and tomorrow under the shades and then they could take them up for the race," he said. "They should start the training earlier and the problem would be solved."

"You see the bends differently under the shades. And I can't get coached because the coaches can't see. They haven't got x-ray eyes." Overt said after complaining to an official.

The men's singles races have been put into groups for training with each group sliding their two daily training runs before the next group can get on the track.

Russians protest Yeltsin deal

FROM DAVID MILLER IN COURCHEVEL

THE game of Russian political roulette continues. Vitaly Smirnov, the International Olympic Committee vice-president who formerly was senior member for the USSR, was confirmed at yesterday's session here as member for the Russian Republic. The deal between rival National Olympic Committees continues, never mind the recent agreement between Boris Yeltsin and Juan Antonio Samaranch.

The unofficial Russian NOC, which, together with 11 other republics of the new Commonwealth of Independent States, had already ap-

peared for IOC recognition, is resisting the Yeltsin-approved switch by the former USSR NOC to represent Russia. Vladimir Vasin, chairman of the unofficial body, claims that Samaranch and Yeltsin have no right to override an internal domestic matter.

The situation is likely to cause embarrassment at the meeting of the 12 independent NOCs in Lausanne on March 9. Smirnov, having the status of vice-president, will have to come up with an offer of compromise that is acceptable to Vasin.

Awaiting the outcome, among others, is Dr Alex

Kaufman, a former Moscow fencer and businessman who acquired Australian citizenship some years ago. His shoe manufacturing company, Kay Cee, which has an office in Moscow, is sponsoring the United Team at this year's two games to the tune of \$170,000. In the form of footwear for both teams. Kay Cee supplies the Russian fishing industry and workers in Siberia with specialist boots that can withstand temperatures of minus 60 C. But the Kay Cee contract, formerly with the USSR ministry, Gosspost, is now invalid and has to be renegotiated.

Simon Barnes in Detroit

Getting their kicks at human pinball

Football — the world's game played with a round ball, as opposed to the American game played with a pointy one — has long been a useful vehicle for exploring the cultural divide. For 20 years and more, football has been on the verge of taking America by storm.

Now, with the World Cup taking place here in 1994, it still hasn't happened. America still doesn't have a professional, outdoor league — and as for that indoor stuff we hear about, that is a heretical travesty of the true footballing faith, and God defend us from that.

So, being an intrepid investigative journalist, I risked contamination and went to a temple of schism called the Cobo Centre in downtown Detroit last weekend, and I watched the Detroit Rockers play Dayton Dynamo. The Rockers conceded a goal in the last second to lose 13-15. Brace yourself: I am afraid the goal was worth two points. Well, had it been struck on the far side of the yellow line, it would have been worth three.

The game bears as much relationship to outdoor football as ping-pong does to lawn tennis. Ping-pong happens to be rather a favourite game of mine. It requires lightning reflexes, quicksilver skills, an explosive nature and a taste for raw violence. So does indoor football, though there is rather more physical contact.

Let us not confuse six-sided American indoor soccer with five-a-side football in a British gym.

This game has a strong cousinship with ice hockey, and it is played in a similar space. You get the ball in the air, a goal eight feet high, constant substitutions and a referee

schooling in the art of leniency.

"It's a very physical game indeed," Andy Chapman, once with Arsenal and now player and assistant coach with the Rockers, said. The announcer kept referring to him as "Superman". "American audiences like a physical game. Referees let a lot go." And so players are slammed into the boards and get two-minute penalties. The Norman White-side tradition of the sharpened elbow is in magnificent shape here and, meanwhile, the ball ricochets as if possessed by a devil. There are frequent passages of play with five shots in 20 seconds. Human pinball.

This is, in short, a terrific game. It is played at a terrific pace: players perform in explosive two-minute bursts and are then substituted, in order to breathe. The goalie dives about like a mad thing, getting any available bit of anatomy in the way. For a moment, I even thought it was time I made a comeback between the sticks.

The indoor game was invented because it is impossible to play outdoors when the ground is frozen solid all winter. But it grew, and indoor professional football continued when the professional outdoor game became extinct.

But let us get things in perspective. This remains a fairly esoteric pursuit, and one with precarious finances. The Detroit game at the weekend was watched by a couple of thousand, mostly children. The franchise loses money: it is reckoned that only one team of the nine in the National Professional Soccer League comes close to break-even. The situation is just as troubled in the rival organisation, the

Major Soccer League, which has seven teams.

"The game has a long way to go, and the old guard, traditional footballing people, they really hate it," Chapman said. "But this is not supposed to be outdoor football. It is an American sport, and it is played by the best indoor players in the world. I have played this game against national teams, against teams from top European clubs — and we've never lost."

"The game makes different demands. A player can be so-so outdoors and fantastic indoors, and the other way round. What's more, I reckon any outdoor player in the world would find his ball-skills improved after a season indoors."

The Rockers were all keen to stress that this is not poor man's football, but a game in its own right. "This is a league for Americans, with innovative rule changes," Steve Paxos, the League's commissioner, said. These include three-point goals, a rule to prevent back-passing, and a six-bus. "We are in the entertainment business, and we have a good product," Chapman said. Selling it is another thing.

The game probably does a great deal of harm to the World Cup organising committee's desire to have the United States taken seriously as an emerging football nation. People love to get snobby about their chosen sport.

Crickets people see baseball as a heresy; rugby union people see rugby football as heresies. Well, anyone who gets sport and religion that confused is in deep trouble. The Detroit Rockers are playing their guts out and keeping the faith, in their own way.

SNOOKER

Semi-final place for Hendry

By PHIL YATES

STEPHEN Hendry appeared more preoccupied with Steve Davis than the high standard of snooker which took him into the semi-finals of the Benson and Hedges Masters at Wembley Conference Centre yesterday.

Hendry beat the 19-year-old 5-1, then said he did not think Davis was playing anywhere near his best.

"He says he is playing the best snooker of his career but I don't see it like that. He is talking positively to give himself confidence and it is working," Hendry said.

"He is trying that bit extra when he plays the likes of me, Jimmy (White) or John (Parrott), but against other players he isn't utterly convincing."

The European Open has been switched from Rotterdam to Antwerp to maximise television exposure.

RUGBY UNION

Dear moves on to Harlequins

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

SIMON Dear, the England B lock, announced yesterday that he is joining the well-known trail to Harlequins.

He does so at a critical time for Rosslyn Park, his club for the last four seasons, who play Thurrock for a place in the quarter-finals of the Pilkington Cup tomorrow but whose prime concern is survival in the first division of the Courage Clubs Championship.

Dear, aged 29 and a policeman; is by no means certain of a first-team place with Harlequins. Competition regulations mean that he would be ineligible for cup matches this season and for four of Harlequins' six remaining league weekends.

He is therefore depriving himself of senior rugby at a time when he has just regained a place in the England development squad and is seeking a place on the Eng-

land B tour of New Zealand this summer.

Dear follows the path taken by former Rosslyn Park locks, Neil Edwards and Paul Ackford, both of whom have won international honours with Harlequins. He emphasised it was a purely personal decision.

"I believe I need a new challenge and that this can only be achieved by changing clubs," he said. "Although I could have waited until the end of the season, I felt it was in everyone's best interests that I made the move now."

Richard Moon, the club captain of Rosslyn Park, echoed feelings expressed by Saracens, another London club to have lost leading players.

"We have to ask who has encouraged him to go now?" he said. "Players who have toiled year after year at the Park are bound to query what is going on."

ATHLETICS

STOCKHOLM: International indoor meeting. Men: 60m: 1, M. Watterson (US), 6.7sec; 2, P. Heald (US), 6.77; 400m: 1, J. Gray (US), 1min 45.0sec; 1,500m: 1, M. Meade (AUS), 3:55.57; 5,000m: 1, C. 3:40.53; 3, J. Bakes (GB), 11:32.2; 10,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 30:43.2; 20,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 1:03:32.2; 40,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 2:07:45.2; 80,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 4:15:32.2; 160,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 8:30:45.2; 320,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 16:45:32.2; 640,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 33:00:45.2; 1,280,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 66:00:45.2; 2,560,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 132:00:45.2; 5,120,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 264:00:45.2; 10,240,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 528:00:45.2; 20,480,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 1056:00:45.2; 40,960,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 2112:00:45.2; 81,920,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 4224:00:45.2; 163,840,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 8448:00:45.2; 327,680,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 16896:00:45.2; 655,360,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 33792:00:45.2; 1,310,720,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 67584:00:45.2; 2,621,440,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 135168:00:45.2; 5,242,880,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 270336:00:45.2; 10,485,760,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 540672:00:45.2; 20,971,520,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 1081344:00:45.2; 41,943,040,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 2162688:00:45.2; 83,886,080,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 4325376:00:45.2; 167,772,160,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 8650752:00:45.2; 335,544,320,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 17301504:00:45.2; 671,088,640,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 34603008:00:45.2; 1,342,177,280,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 69206016:00:45.2; 2,684,354,560,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 138412032:00:45.2; 5,368,709,120,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 276824064:00:45.2; 10,737,418,240,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 553648128:00:45.2; 21,474,836,480,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 1107296256:00:45.2; 42,949,672,960,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 2214592512:00:45.2; 85,899,345,920,000m: 1, M. Kiprop (KEN), 4429185024:00:45.2; 171,798,691,840,000m: 1, M. 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FRIDAY FEBRUARY 7 1992

Games threaten to be an expensive chaos

FROM DAVID MILLER
IN ALBERTVILLE

As I sit on the hotel balcony, gazing west at Mont Saulire, it is an exquisite picture: jagged snow-capped peaks set against a blue sky, stately pines, and sumptuous wide ski slopes of perfect whipped-cream snow bathed in sunshine. Eastwards behind me lies the cobweb of Haute Savoie valleys and potentially the worst chaos in Olympic history.

Nobody knows whether the Winter Olympic Games of Albertville, uniquely and possibly disastrously spread over 15 competition sites at 13 towns and villages across 600 square miles, can escape catastrophic transport and communication disorganisation. Worse still, nobody knows whether the Games venture will save or further damage the 900-

year-old community of mountain farmers and cheese-makers. I confess to being uncertain, even afraid, that for the first time in 36 years' involvement with the Olympics, I am out of control, unable to ascertain fully the intricacies of what is happening, of the fortunes being risked, unable to judge whether the mammoth Olympic machine is any longer to the benefit of mankind apart from a few sportsmen.

The Games, which begin tomorrow, are a logistical horror. We have sensed the probability since that day in Lausanne in 1986 when the International Olympic Committee (IOC), denying Paris the Summer Games in preference to Barcelona, awarded France the Winter Games as compensation. The reality is infinitely more disorganised than we have feared for the past six years.

"If the co-ordination doesn't

improve, the Games will be a spectacular failure," André Bardin, the mayor of Tignes, host to freestyle skiing, has said.

Journalists with the responsibility of informing the world what is going on are already distraught with transport restrictions, conflicting administrative information, sheer fatigue. And the Games have not begun.

In an ominous, almost prescient way, these Games are both a reflection and an embodiment of the political and economic confusion of today's world: of Russia, of Yugoslavia, of north-east Africa. On the one hand, they may be seen glamorous; on the other, they teeter upon the grotesque.

I cannot wait to witness the men's downhill race on Sunday at Val d'Isère — if I can get there or the captivating contests of the figure skating. If I can get permission to park my car, pro-



viding the ignition switch has not again frozen solid.

I am chauvinistically hoping that Mark Tait can win Britain's first bobsleigh medal for 28 years, yet it is really moral that the bob run at La Plagne should have cost \$41 million and that

the 40 tons of ammonia needed for artificial freezing should threaten the environment.

Jean-Claude Killy and Michel Barnier, the applicants and the ringmasters of Albertville, claim to be protecting the fragile ecosystem of Savoie. Water purifiers and rubbish incinerators are included within the \$1.7 billion investment that has transformed the road and rail access to the region; yet the bid for the Games was never anything but ambitious tourism expansion of L'Esplanade Killy. And this is the man who could become a presidential personal nominee as a member of the IOC.

Will Savoie be made or bankrupted by the Games? Brides-les-Bains, site of the main competitors' village, has spent \$40 million on a new cable car and other facilities. Pralognan, a village of 160 souls, has spent \$1 million on a 5,000-seat stadium

for the demonstration sport of curling. These and other communities are scared stiff about clearing their costs.

As you approach Albertville along the new highway from Chambéry, there is a sulphuric yellow haze against the mountainside from the steelworks. The town's 18,000 population now has, courtesy of the Games, a new theatre, an indoor shopping plaza, and hotels that have to survive after February 23 when the last of the 800,000 spectators leaves town.

Here in Courchevel, it is as though Charles de Gaulle airport had been erected on the mountainside, though the jungle of concrete was there long before the Games. There really is a mini-airport cut into the rock alongside the piste at 8,000 feet.

Yet nobody can tell me, if I drive down to the opening ceremony at Albertville, whether I will be allowed, not having a special pass, to drive back up the valley to the hotel where I am paying £120 a night, and the first welcoming words on arrival were the demand "Your credit card", without so much as a 's'il vous plait'.

Everyone is in a frenzy to recoup the investment. The price of a cup of coffee at the IOC's hotel is such that I shall soon have spent £100 on coffee. Just down the hill yesterday, they were erecting the podium for the ski jump medals. There was a gathering of enthusiastic children watching, and the mood was reminiscent of *Jour de Fête*. The nightmare here is that the Albertville Games really will be as though perceived by Jacques Tati.

Southampton have the nerve for a shoot-out

Key figures opt out of United's responsibilities

BY STUART JONES
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

SOUTHAMPTON, though they did not play specifically for penalties, were relieved when their FA Cup fourth-round replay at Old Trafford reached the end of extra time on Wednesday night. They were wholly convinced that they would be the survivors in the ancient tournament's most modern innovation.

Their belief was evident. Even though the dreaded shoot-out was to be staged against the potentially distracting background of the Stretford End, the main bank of Manchester United's supporters, neither Southampton's five chosen men nor the rest of their colleagues assembled on the halfway line displayed any overt signs of apprehension.

Naturally, Neil Ruddock, Alan Shearer, Barry Horne and Mickie Adams in turn expressed their own personal relief as they wheeled away, having successfully fulfilled their duty, but Southampton's euphoria was a collective smile throughout the ordeal. United's contrastingly subdued group were frowning even before Neil Webb missed their first attempt.

The difference in attitude was decisive. Whereas Alex Ferguson earnestly consulted each member of his line-up to find out who might be prepared to accept the onerous responsibility, Ian Branfoot

know that he had, at least, half a dozen representatives able and willing to pass the individual test of nerves.

Notably, United's most experienced candidates — such as Bryan Robson, Mark Hughes and Brian McClair — were not selected. Instead the youths were put on the spot. Denis Irwin and Lee Sharpe kept the club marginally in contention but Ryan Giggs, the youngest of them all, had his effort saved.

Poignantly, their recognised penalty-taker, Steve Bruce, is recuperating from a hernia operation on the sunlit coast of Florida. Southampton deliberately left Matthew Le Tissier until last in case the scores were still level and the coolest of heads required amid the mounting tension.

Le Tissier, described by his manager as "the joker" has yet to miss a penalty. He was ultimately spared and Branfoot believes that no one should have to undergo the cruellest of experiences. "I'm

dead against it," he said, "and so are 99 per cent of people in the game."

"Nobody is totally happy with the system but the Football Association introduced it and we can't influence that decision. I would rather stay with the old way. I would not mind coming to Old Trafford again, although it is an awesome and forbidding place even when it is empty."

The police's insistence that replays may be staged only with 10 days' notice largely influenced the FA's new policy. The governing body argues that the tournament might otherwise run into severe fixture congestion. Yet, as Branfoot agrees, the method, used on four occasions so far this season, is unsatisfactory.

What alternative is there, though? It has been suggested that extra time could be sudden death with the winners being the first team to score. The proposal is more attractive and ties would thus be concluded in a fairer fashion but on the additional period, be indefinite and extend beyond midnight?

Ferguson appreciates that United's championship ambitions are likely to have been enhanced because their programme has become lighter. Semi-finalists in the Rumbelows Cup against either Middlesbrough or Peterborough, they will now play on average six games a month until the end of the season.

United's defeat," the secretary, Des McBain, said.

Dean Saunders, of Liverpool, could face an FA charge of misconduct after television caught him elbowing Ian Alexander, the Bristol Rovers defender, in the face on Wednesday night at the Twerton Park cup-tie.

Cascarino moves, page 31

Dexter detects change is close

FROM ALAN LEE
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT
IN WELLINGTON

A COMPLETE switch to four-day cricket in the county championship could be a reality by next year, according to Ted Dexter, chairman of the England committee.

Dexter, who is in New Zealand watching the final Test match, is optimistic that the reactionary attitude of a number of county clubs on this perennial issue has softened as a result of the superficial and contrived three-day games that have predominated in the past two years.

A Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB) working party, chaired by Mike Murray, of Middlesex, is at present investigating the overall structure of the domestic game and will present its recommendations to a special meeting of the board in May.

When the working party was initiated, county chairmen gave a verbal undertaking that they would adopt its findings rather than filing them in the pending tray, as has happened with two previous such reports.

Dexter, who has been among the most vocal campaigners for a change to four-day cricket, remains doubtful whether radical recommendations will find favour with an overwhelmingly conservative body, but he believes his own ambitions for the county game may soon be realised.

"I detect a genuine change of heart in certain counties over four-day games," Dexter said. "They looked out of the committee room window and saw that a lot of three-day cricket was not of good standard, not competitive and not conducive to producing Test players."

Immediate support for Dexter's view has come from Bob Bennett, the England tour manager. Speaking in his role as chairman of Lancashire, a county previously set against a four-day championship, he said: "We have had a rethink on the matter and I agree there is a genuine swing within counties who opposed it in the past."

Dexter attended a prolonged round of committee



Padded cell: Ian Botham, in his 100th Test match, waits to bat against New Zealand in Wellington yesterday. Photograph: Graham Morris

meetings before flying out to join the touring team but he will not be back in England in time for the spring meeting of the TCCB next month, when he himself comes up for re-election. "I have been given dispensation to miss the meeting in order to follow the World Cup," he said.

□ Durham suffered the second casualty of their Zimbabwe tour yesterday when Phil Berry, the former Yorkshire player, joined his fellow spinner, David Gray, with a split hand.

Berry needed three stitches, leaving Durham with only the occasional bowler, Gary Brown, in the spin department. The former Middlesex player seized his opportunity by taking three for 26 in ten overs against Zimbabwe Under-19 at Old Hararians.

The home side were all out for 152 and Durham won by six wickets after Mark Briers and Paul Henderson, the England under-17 player, shared an unbeaten stand of 105.

SCORERS: Zimbabwe Under-19 152 (G Whelan 3-10, G K Brown 3-23; Durham 154-4 (M P Briers 63 not out, P W Henderson 36 not out).

Stewart's day, page 30

Player may sue the TCCB

BY MARTIN SEABY

IN THE first action of its kind in the sport, Phillip Robinson, the former Yorkshire batsman, is planning to sue the Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB) for restraint of trade. His solicitors are awaiting counsel's opinion before taking the first steps in an action that could have far-reaching repercussions for the professional game.

The issue centres on the TCCB's two categories of players. Counties may sign two of those on list A in any five-year period, while those on list B are unrestricted.

Robinson, aged 28, wanted to leave Yorkshire at the end of last summer, but the fact that he was offered a two-year contract put him on list A. Yorkshire have since withdrawn their offer but, despite an appeal to the TCCB registrations sub-committee, he remains a restricted player, and counties are unwilling to use one of their options on a solid county batsman — even one with a first-class average of over 36 — rather than a Test match player.

Robinson will find a good deal of support from the Cricketers' Association, the players' union, which is seeking an overhaul of the legislation. Tim Curtis, the chairman, said: "We think the procedure needs reviewing and we have a meeting coming up with the board about it. The irregularities tend to favour the counties, and the people of particular concern to us are young players who cannot get first-team cricket and want to move, but cannot. We recognise the intent behind the rule but the situation is far from ideal, with the board at the moment rule-maker and arbitrator."

The problems were summed up by Kim Barnett, the Derbyshire captain. "If we had the funds we would certainly be interested in a batsman like Robinson, but not if he was a category A player," he said. "We only have room for one, and you have to bear in mind that if a quality player comes on the market, such as Chris Lewis, you want to be in the running."

Swindon cup-tie to be screened

SWINDON'S FA Cup fifth-round tie against Aston Villa has been put back 24 hours so that it can be screened live on BBC at 3.05 on February 16. At 1pm that day BSkyB will screen the match between Ipswich and Bristol Rovers or Liverpool.

Rovers replay their fourth-round tie at Anfield next Tuesday and the winners will

be guaranteed a quarter share of the £240,000 television package.

Bolton's game against Southampton is also on the Sunday, but has been passed over by television. "We were advised to switch from the Saturday for possible screening, but the TV companies must have changed their minds after Manchester

Maskell a master of well-chosen word

BY ANDREW LONGMORE
TENNIS CORRESPONDENT

ONE story says everything about the unique commentary style of Dan Maskell, who has announced his retirement after 62 years of broadcasting at Wimbledon. NBC, the American network that televises the championships, eavesdropped once on the BBC's coverage. When they tuned in, there was nothing. Just a picture and silence. Then, after perhaps a minute, one word, uttered quietly, authoritatively in that deep voice steeped in English summers: "Superb".

Not for Maskell the overkill, the hype or glib verbosity. No need for a stack of adjectives when one would do. Superb. Or even, "oh, I say", his stock-in-trade response to

a thrilling pass or a glorious return. Like John Arlott, Richie Benaud, Henry Longhurst, Peter Alliss, the really great broadcasters, Maskell had that "come sit beside me and enjoy the match" tone, at once comforting, enthusiastic and informative.

If there was a technical point, nobody was better qualified than Maskell, formerly coach to British Davis Cup and Wightman Cup teams, to make it. But he never presumed his listeners to be ignorant. He came into their homes for a fortnight each summer, but never intruded. "You have to have something special to do that," John Rowlinson, producer of the BBC's Wimbledon coverage and deputy head of BBC Sport, says. "The voice was obviously important, but I

think people liked his honesty and they felt he could teach them things about the game."

To the surprise of even those closest to him, there will be no more "superbs" or "oh, I say" this summer. True to his prediction that he would always know when the time was right to give up, Maskell has retired on the spot. Understandably, after not missing a day at Wimbledon since 1929 — he had to leave early one night when his voice began to go — he wants to enjoy a summer without work, wants to sit in the stands with his friends, wants to see more of his family, to take a summer holiday. At the age of 83, he has earned it.

But, though he will not say so, perhaps the enjoyment has faded. Certainly, the thought of unshaded after-

noons in the Spanish sun at this summer's Olympics was not appealing. Nor was the increasing dominance of brown over brain in the men's game.



Maskell: the best

"We have lost players with a strategic approach to the game. Bill Tilden, Jean Borotra and Rod Laver. It's more brute strength now," he says. In his pantheon of greats, Maskell would number John McEnroe, "a near genius but a sporting tragedy", Rod Laver, "my epitome of a great champion", and Martina Navratilova, "the greatest of them all". But when the 1992 championships start, Maskell is quite as likely to be out on court 14 watching two British players. "I have missed not being able to do that," he says. But what else will he miss on June 22nd?

"The BBC's sausage rolls. They were the best in the business." Which, come to think of it, is a fair description of the man himself.

Women take centre stage

BY DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

WOMEN'S rugby, presently undergoing an increase in numbers that has yet to be reflected by the commercial interest which surrounds the men's game, enjoys the highlight of its season on Sunday. The sixth meeting between Wales and England takes place, for the first time, in the National Stadium at Cardiff Arms Park, a venue that not even the women's World Cup final enjoyed last season.

The game is booming in a way that has created problems for its administrators. Ten years after the formation of the Women's Rugby Football Union (WRFU), 2,500 students and seniors play regularly and this season alone there have been 22 clubs formed. The established women's clubs are running youth teams to cope with girls

attracted to the game after playing new-age rugby.

The WRFU, after a conference last month, has mounted a fact-finding mission in concert with the Sports Council to explore the benefits of affiliation with the Rugby Football Union. Because they, too, are at the heart of the burgeoning international game, the WRFU is concerned that demands on administrators will increase.

In the meantime England, World Cup finalists, are out to protect their unbeaten record against Wales, who field a new-look team including five newcomers, four of them in the back division of an XV captained by the experienced Lisa Burgess. England's one new cap is Jackie Edwards, the Blackheath centre, and Emma Mitchell has been

coaxed out of retirement to play scrum half.

As a prelude to the Rice Challenge Cup meeting, the countries played for the first time a student international at Oxford on Wednesday. England winning 14-3.

WALES: J Thomas (Bedford Harriers), W Shaw (Lampeter), J Jones (Shrewsbury), G Davies (Preston), P George (Preston), R Arnold (Worcester), E Edwards (Cardiff), J West (Cardiff), E Evans (Cardiff), M Evans (Worcester), F Morgan (Cardiff), G Morgan (Cardiff), C Morgan (Cardiff), J Morgan (Cardiff), L Morgan (Cardiff), S Morgan (Cardiff), T Morgan (Cardiff), W Morgan (Cardiff), Y Morgan (Cardiff), Z Morgan (Cardiff).

ENGLAND: J Morgan (Cardiff), L Morgan (Cardiff), S Morgan (Cardiff), T Morgan (Cardiff), W Morgan (Cardiff), Y Morgan (Cardiff), Z Morgan (Cardiff).

More rugby, page 31



HEALTH
How did Churchill drink so much and survive?



LIFE & TIMES

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 7 1992



MOTORING
Why the Princess of Wales chose a Mercedes

Somerville girls

One of Oxford's last women's colleges is about to throw 113 years of peace and harmony out of its mullioned windows. Who dares to let the men in?

The Somerville girl has done well. She is forceful, independent and outspoken. But then she has much to live up to. She knows she may become a prime minister — Somerville uniquely boasts four (Mrs Thatcher, Gandhi, Bandaranaike and Meir) — a writer like Iris Murdoch, Rose Macaulay or Dorothy L. Sayers; a Nobel prizewinning scientist like Dorothy Hodgkin; she may turn out to be a Shirley Williams, a Dilys Powell, an Esther Rantzen: Somervillians all.

"If you met a Somerville girl," as Dr Mary Archer says, "you would know she would be seriously clever."

"I think Somerville made us all quite *unafraid*," says Victoria Glendinning in what must be described as ringing tones. "I've never met a Somerville girl who was afraid of the world."

So is this creature going to take men lying down? She is not. Would women of their spirit look on while "immature, obnoxious young men" sweep in and take half the place? Would Eleanor Rathbone MP, or the withering broadcaster Margherita Laski, or the BBC's matronly Grace Wyndham Goldie have allowed it?

There is certainly something about the air in Somerville. Its very name, called after Mary Somerville, the pioneering Victorian mathematician and astronomer, suggests a sunny, villagey, feminine place, quite unsuitable for the male. And while other bastions have fallen — Girton, St Anne's, St Hugh's, Lady Margaret Hall — Somerville is not going to go without a fuss. Across its lawned quadrangle today, every window is festooned with red and black stickers: "Somervillians say NO." On Wednesday night, an emergency motion at the Oxford Union — "This House would keep men out of Somerville" — was carried unanimously, 512 ayes to 109 against.

Letters from Somervillians to the papers this week expressed shock and dismay, headlined, "A lesson in betrayal." What betrayal? There were two. First, whenever the college has been balloted, it has voted to cling steadfastly to its single-sex status, along with St Hilda's, which now becomes the very last remnant. Secondly, this final capitulation was decided without consultation. The girls each received leaflets announcing a meeting with the principal last weekend, but by Monday the news of the decision was already public. The meeting on Monday was highly charged. Mrs Catherine Hughes, Somerville's principal, had to listen to eloquent and impassioned speeches from the floor. When Mrs Hughes departed, there was even a slow handclap.

Alice Walton does not look like a Somervillian in the Thatcher tradition. She is slight, quiet-voiced and handbag-free, and when she arrived from her Hull comprehensive she was overawed. But, in her third year, she has learnt the Somervillian virtue of confidence, and hers was one of the published letters of protest.

"We have nothing against men. We enjoy Oxford life," she says. "Our point is that until the men's colleges have equal numbers of women — that would be real equality in the university — we must keep women's colleges, and all they stand for."

Somerville stood for a peaceful haven for her, after her co-ed school. Unlike the women who are in the minority in former men's colleges, Somervillians do not need a Women's Tutor or a women's committee to represent their interests. They need not worry about ugly behaviour by male undergraduates, or the awkward aftermaths of affairs with fellow students on the same staircase. For the moment, Somerville has no such tensions. "There is a sense of harmony here. Everyone can feel it," Alice says. "It just seems fantastic to us that when the government launches Opportunity 2000, an institution like Somerville should think of reducing women's places, and the academic posts open to women, without consulting us."

All true. The college, of course, has its reasons, discussed behind

closed doors. The facts are incontrovertible. Somerville has lost its cherished intellectual pre-eminence at the top of the Norrington table. Women's colleges all began to slide the moment King's College Cambridge decided to open its doors to women in 1969. The men's motives were plain: sheer altruism, of course, to increase women's opportunities. If they improved their standards thereby, that was luck. They knew the women's colleges were turning away women cleverer than some of their men; now they could plunder the supply.

Now the women's colleges are having to turn to male fellows, because there are simply not enough women in university posts. Also, a college reasonably wants to be its students' first choice, not to have to resort to the pool of bright but unplaced applicants.

But whatever Somerville's deliberations, the decision was "agonising" for the college. Dr Catherine Duncan-Jones, of the governing body, tells me so, and she has been a dihard against change for 25 years, until now. She is not in the least surprised that the girls are upset. "They are loyal to the institution and I share their feelings. They feel mistrustful, but they cannot know all our reasons. It was not a cruel and arbitrary decision. There was no ease or comfort in it. And it is nothing to do with liking or not liking men. But it is done. And although my heart isn't in it, my head is."

Dame Janet Vaughan, the former principal, was more unequivocal about it, declaring that the time had come. "I think it's very exciting," she said this week. Dame Janet, now 92 and long retired, is regarded with reverence by all Somervillians of the post-war decades.

One of them, the writer Margaret Forster, who was offered scholarships in history by both Oxford and Cambridge, says she chose Somerville because its whole ambience seemed to be permeated with Dame Janet's spirit: artistic, idiosyncratic, faintly bohemian. "At my interview, she sat in a sunny room filled with flowers and gave us a happy meal served in scallop shells."

Years later I watched her on television talking about her work in blood transfusion and the metabolism of radioactive isotopes and the treatment of pernicious anaemia, and being there at the liberation of Belsen, and it made me think: 'What have I done with my life?'

This is what women's colleges have, and what future generations will lose. A continuum of scholarly women, inspiring bright girls, who then inspire the next batch of bright girls. In 1894, Jane Kirkaldy was the first woman to



"Until the men's colleges have equal numbers of women, we must keep women's colleges, and all they stand for": Alice Walton (centre foreground) leads a protest

graduate in animal morphology. One of her last Somervillian students was Dorothy Crowfoot (later Hodgkin). Among Dorothy Hodgkin's students was Margaret Thatcher, and so on. Dame Janet, born 1899, the niece of one of Somerville's founders, spans Somerville's entire history.

"She very much set the tone," Esther Rantzen says. "She was not terribly impressed by undergraduates who sat around or just socialised. She felt one should use every minute and use it well." One year, one of Esther's theatrical productions, involving a naked vestal virgin, was banned by the dean, a story that made all the tabloids. "Dame Janet did not mind a bit. The tickets sold out."

Somerville, although millions in the red, like all women's colleges, now boasts a splendid new Margaret Thatcher conference centre, endowed by its eponymous alumna. However disaffected she was with Oxford university, she seems to retain her loyalty to Somerville. As soon as she arrived in 1943, "a plump, pale, solemn girl of 19", as the novelist Nina Bayden recalled her in the anthol-

ogy *My Oxford*, she joined the Conservative Club. Nina was shocked. She had joined the Labour Club herself, and told Margaret Forster that people from their backgrounds, both grammar school girls on state scholarships, had been lucky to get into Oxford, and should not use their good fortune simply to join the ranks of the privileged. "I pointed out that the Labour Club, besides being on the side of the angels, was also more fun. All the really lively and interesting people were members."

Margaret smiled her pretty china doll's smile. Of course, she admitted, the Labour Club was more fashionable — a deadly word that immediately reduced my pretensions. Unlike me, she was not 'playing' at politics."

Other than its predilection for success, Somervillians are not truly a type. "Other people thought we were. But we were quite a mixture," says Victoria Glendinning. "One of our group joined a closed order of nuns. She took my copy of *Lolita*, and never gave it back."

The ethos of women's colleges can inspire a shudder — the image

of rows of women in tiny rooms huddled over mean gas fires, brewing cocoa — or a room-of-one's-own sense of freedom. Margaret Forster says of her Somerville scholar's room, with its mullioned windows overlooking cedar lawns, "I wanted that room more than I wanted anything out of the women's movement." But Glendinning married in her second year, to escape "the shrill shrieks of female voices in hall each evening, and the smell of stale talc. There can be something quite oppressive, as well as liberating, about the company of women." But now she looks back with gratitude for the company of all those startlingly bright girls. "I went back recently to speak at high table and there were all these very old, noble faces, of women who had test incredibly worthwhile lives."

Somervillians want to cherish their history, and I can understand their feelings. When my college, Girton, — 10 years older than Somerville — first opened its doors to men, it seemed a recklessly generous move to us. We knew so well what a badge it had been to get a women's college founded in the teeth of male opposition. As M.C. Bradbrook, then mistress of Girton, said — rightly — "I know you feel amputated from your past."

But our founder, Emily Davies, always insisted on no special treatment for women, no special exams, we must do as the men. If King's opened its doors to women we must open ours to men. Historical fact renders this notion illogical, but now Girton has had 12 years of male undergraduates' tramping feet, and undergraduates boast its 50-50 men/women ratio. It is not the same college. It is no longer so special. The Girton girl, as parodied in *Punch* cartoons, has gone. But the men do sing with fierce pride of the valiant Victorian virgins who "fought so well and played well, as everybody knows" at the college's annual feast, under the portraits of the bonneted lady benefactors who could never have imagined that one day the situation would arise where women would offer up their hard-won places to men.

As Glendinning says, it had become a source of pride that Somerville stayed firm. "When colleges started going mixed it seemed dashing to have girls at Wadham and Christ Church. Now it seems much more radical and daring to resist the pressure." But the old Somervillians agree it is inevitable. They all speak of "the tide of history". We can't have female ghettos, however comfortable to some. Mary Archer says

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Spirits of Somerville: (from left) Dame Janet Vaughan, Dame Iris Murdoch and Margaret Thatcher



The teachers and the taught: (from left) Esther Rantzen, Dr Mary Archer and Margaret Forster

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GALLERIES

Richard Cork
reviews a
retrospective of
the work of
**Lucian Freud at
the Tate Gallery
in Liverpool**

Although Lucian Freud only makes rare appearances in the work he produces, his presence as the relentless observer is impossible to ignore. Throughout the retrospective survey at the Tate Gallery, Liverpool, which spans half a century of unrelenting activity, Freud's gaze usually remains laser-eyed. Once he has settled on the object of his scrutiny, nothing deflects him from investigating the forms with the zealous precision of a detective.

Freud's style has changed, along with the people who submit themselves to his protracted stare. But the intensity of his hard, single-minded probing is manifested even in the most youthful section of the show.

Among the early drawings, an ink and crayon self-portrait encloses his 25-year-old features in contours sleek enough to vie with Botticelli. His hair rises in chiselled tendrils from a face dominated by large, glacial eyes. This is a man already bent on rejecting lazy or sentimental looking in favour of a rigorous alternative.

He had no qualms, during the same period, about defining the rotund features of a dead puffin with as much care as his living subjects received. The open-beaked bird must have been a disquieting companion as it lay before him, half-wrapped in a blanket. But Freud insisted on lingering over his decomposed model, specifying the minutiae of the puffin's broken body with meticulous clarity.

There was a moment, in the second world war, when Freud strayed from the primacy of observation and flirted with Surrealism. In a startlingly untypical picture called *The Painter's Room*, an outsize zebra swathed in red and yellow stripes thrusts his head through the window. But the animal seems merely theatrical compared with the sustained emphasis, in the pictures hanging nearby, on appraising the thing seen. Freud must quickly have found this goal so absorbing that he had no further need to resort to fantasy.

The act of painting a girl with a kitten yielded an image far stranger and more unsettling than any amount of bizarre, dream-like concoctions.



Brushwork committed to minuscule exactitude: Lucian Freud's *Girl with a White Dog*, 1950-1951, now in Liverpool. Courtesy of the trustees of the Tate Gallery.

Her eyes are painted with a scrupulousity so fierce that windows can be seen, reflected in her odd bulbous pupils.

The strands of her dark hair, specified as painstakingly as the most microscopic Pre-Raphaelite portrait, bristle with the same disquiet that her face discloses. In the hand holding the kitten up in front of her, the fingers close round the animal's throat with menacing rigidity.

For a while, in the early Fifties, Freud moves away from this mood of frozen expectancy and grows more sensuous. The advent of a freckled, flaxen-haired girl inspires the most tender paintings on view here.

He no longer feels impelled, as in an earlier portrait of the dark-haired model, to expose a pale breast and juxtapose it with the dog lying in her lap. The sitters, dressed in simple, everyday clothes, and Freud savours her untroubled features with brushwork less

committed to minuscule exactitude.

As the Fifties came to a close, painters everywhere responded to the challenge thrown down by the impulsive, muscular and free-wheeling strategies of the new American painting. Freud had no intention of following the Abstract Expressionists in their willingness to jettison representational references. But, like his close friend Francis Bacon, he took what he needed from the audacity of the New York avant-garde.

His mark-making becomes looser, emancipated at last from the glassy finish of the previous period. The need for a more convulsive and pugnacious approach culminates in the mighty *Sleeping Head* of 1962, where the woman's flesh seems to have been pummelled into submission by Freud's belligerent brush.

A price, however, had to be paid for this new expansive-

ness. As Freud grew wilder, so he risked losing sight of the tension which gave his finest earlier works their piercing fascination. He looks puzzled in a freely handled self-portrait of 1963, where his head is propped up by a jutting hand and his eyes, for once, are narrowed and weary.

Dissatisfied with the search for a more unbridled approach, Freud began to develop a greater caution in his way with paint. The outcome, at first, was timid.

A small 1967 canvas of fern spreading fuzzily outwards from a pot is the weakest painting in the show. Freud has always needed an engagement with the human figure to bring out his most potent qualities.

In the same year, he turned his attention to a naked girl asleep on a sheet. Almost filling three sides of the picture, this lightly brushed ground allows her to float on its surface. At the same time, though, Freud treats her body with a far from dreamy

realism. Public hair and genitalia are defined with far greater frankness than before, and he shows an uncanny ability to see through the skin and disclose the veins and blood beneath.

The more Freud concentrated on naked figures, the more vulnerable they grew. Offering a corrective to stereotyped ideas about the automatic eroticism of the female nude, these powerful paintings stress isolation and apprehension instead.

In one forceful *Naked Portrait*, the model appears marooned on a mattress. While one leg is hunched up in a foetal position, the other curves round the base of the bed. Freud himself cannot be seen, but she seems acutely aware of his proximity. Indeed, the foreground is dominated by a paint-spattered stool where brushes, palette knife and mixing bowl all testify to the artist's presiding presence.

By no means all the images now stress loneliness. Two

nudes occupy the bed in *Annie and Alice*, snuggling together for warmth as one places a consoling hand on the other's pregnant belly.

But the latter still looks anxious, and Freud is never afraid to reveal sagging flesh, blotches, birthmarks and all the other blemishes which distinguish real female bodies from their idealised air-brushed counterparts in pin-up imagery. His women are capable of experiencing pain as well as delight, and sometimes their bodies match the ungainliness of the worn-out, bursting sofas where they rest their formidable bulk.

Men are treated with an equal amount of directness. In one arresting canvas, a male nude sprawls on a bed with his hand shielding his eyes. A black sock, trailing from the tip of his foot, echoes the curve of his exposed penis.

In the uncompromising world of Freud's maturity,

where people are surrounded by bare floorboards, exposed plumbing, crudely plastered walls and a rudimentary sink, everyone seems conscious of mortality. His mother, arrayed in white, stretches out on a black bed-sheet as though suicidally awaiting her death. But the crisp vigour with which these figures are depicted prevents his work from becoming morbid.

Standing by the Rags is the title of a magnificent recent canvas, where the female nude looks weary enough to fall against the linen scraps heaped behind her. But Freud's increasingly encrusted pigment, deployed with magisterial eloquence, ensures that she is buoyed up by an innate resilience. The will to endure remains inextinguishable, lending her and the rest of this exhibition an obstinate sense of grandeur.

Lucian Freud at the Tate Gallery, Liverpool (051-709 3223) Wed-Sun 10am-6pm; Tues 11am-6pm; Closed Mon. Until March 22.

CRITICS' CHOICE

● **ROTHENSTEIN'S BOXES**: Best known as a print-maker, Michael Rothenstein has, over the last 30 years, made a long series of box-constructing often thematically related to his prints. Few have been exhibited, but now comes a retrospective of more than 100. At the same time, there is a show in St James's of his prints from the Seventies.

Rothenstein's Boxes. Royal Academy of Arts, Piccadilly, W1 (071-439 7438) Daily 10am-6pm, until March 5. Admission £2, concessions £1. Images and Themes. Peter Nahum, 5 Ryder Street, SW1 (071-930 6059) Mon-Sat 10am-5.30pm, until March 13.

● **F.E. McWILLIAM**: One of the few still-active survivors from the Slade in the era of Tonks, McWilliam has never entirely shed the Surrealist influence from the Thirties. His new wooden sculptures retain a Surrealist interest in the arbitrary effects of tree shape and grain. Also works by Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff, included in the International Surrealist Exhibition of 1936.

Mayor Gallery, 22a Cork Street, W1 (071-734 3558) Mon-Fri 10am-5.30pm, Sat 10am-1pm, until March 20.

● **ROBYN DENNY**: Denny was a golden boy of the Sixties, given his own retrospective at the Tate in 1973, when he was only 43. Since then his hard-edged abstractions have fallen out of favour. This new show indicates a gradual softening of edges and flexibility of form.

Bernard Jacobson Gallery, 14a Gifford Street, London W1 (071-495 8575). Mon-Fri 10am-6pm, Sat 10am-1pm. Until February 29.

● **BARCLAYS YOUNG ARTISTS AWARD**: In previous years the show has offered useful pointers to what is going on at art schools. The judges this year were Mel Gooding, John McEwen and Bruce McLean. The nine artists shortlisted seem interested in installations and found objects, rather than traditional painting and sculpture. Andrew Kearney took the award with *Untitled 1991*, a fortress of concrete and steel.

Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Gardens, London W2 (071-402 6075). Daily, 10am-6pm. Until March 8.

● **ALAN DAVIE**: Claims that Davie is Scotland's "greatest living artist" are arguable, but this retrospective of more than 100 works from the Thirties right up to date is a timely and desirable exercise. Emphasis is on the variety of Davie's activities and interests and the way they are reflected in the painted images.

McLellan Galleries, 270 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow (041-331 1854). Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm, Sun, noon-6pm, until March 22.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

TELEVISION REVIEW

Monarch of the lens

In the good old days of widespread scrofula, the forefathers of our Queen held the reputation of dispensing miraculous cures. Any subject afflicted by these nasty glandular swellings could probably make an appointment for a royal laying on of hands, with no questions asked. Even the scrofulous infant Samuel Johnson, for example, was "touched" by Queen Anne.

Those days are passed, of course. Yet there were moments during last night's highly entertaining *Elizabeth R* (BBC1) when one hoped the tradition could be revived, if only to see the Queen's reaction. "And you will see on the schedule. Ma'am, that after you launch the ship and unveil the plaques you will touch some people with scrofula." The Queen, one fancies, would do an almost undetectable double-take, then purse her lips, think hard, and say brightly: "That will be interesting."

The idea of *Elizabeth R*

was to show the monarch at work—perhaps to impress us the visit to Windsor Castle, and the Queen prepares her family to meet him. "He seems amazed by the size of everything," she reports, quite animatedly. "He only has two English words, and they are, erm, quite interesting words." Evidently she doesn't want to tell the world that Lech Walesa says "What a whopper!" all the time.

In his play *A Question of Attribution* (shown last autumn) Alan Bennett suggested that the Queen lives in a world of facts. "Not that," insisted Prunella Scales as the Queen; "Give me facts." But the lesson of *Elizabeth R* was that the Queen would probably enjoy a chat—with her portrait-painter, for example—but that people are unac-

countably nervous in her company. So it is down to the Queen to think of a polite question, to get the ball rolling. And it seems to be an uphill task. One begins to appreciate, seeing the Queen momentarily stumped, that in the repertoire of possible conversation-starters, the old chestnut "Have you come far?" is something of an all-time gem.

The deft good humour of *Elizabeth R* was its great appeal. It was surprisingly easy to forget the big "issues", such as "How far did the Palace control all this?" and "How dare they manipulate the populace into liking the Queen?", when confronted with the amazing sight of three Windsor Castle footmen carefully polishing a mahogany table 160 feet

long, one of them actually standing on the brilliantly reflecting surface with dust-ers tied around his feet. Conversations and images are what will be remembered from this film: the Queen posing for her portrait beside a window in Buckingham Palace; appearing at a diplomatic reception and declaring: "Oh look, we're all in blue; something wrong there"; and administering the coup de grâce to a conversation about diary-keeping. "Do you keep it in your own hand?" she is asked. "I can't write any other way," she says, baffled by the question.

The best moment was when she pocketed her winnings from the Derby sweepstake. She put the sixteen quid into her pocket with the air of someone thinking. "Now I can get that handbag from Dolcis in the morning."

LYNNE TRUSS

● Television listings, page 10

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Anything else is a compromise

Ann Steele became a paid attendant to the elderly and considers the pitfalls of providing, and purchasing, private care

An aged handful for the hired help

A sharp rap on the door just before 7am on a chilly Monday startles me out of a deep sleep. An imperious voice booms: "Good morning," and the bedroom door is swung open.

I soon get to learn as the week drags to its miserable end that this is not a friendly greeting but a summons which really means: "Get up. We are waiting for our morning tea."

With some trepidation I get out of bed to start my first day as a housekeeper-cook-carer for an autistic couple living in luxury in an isolated manor house set in its own grounds in rural Leicestershire.

When I decided to join the ranks of the poorly paid army of private carers whose efforts and patience enable old people to remain in their own homes, I had no idea what I was in for. Life below stairs in the 1990s is still startlingly anachronistic. I could almost have been playing a bit role in *Upstairs, Downstairs* and after my first day in service I was tempted to walk out.

To be fair, it was only this first experience that was unnerving. The elderly couple still lived as though they were running a household of servants. My week seemed like a month. I was only spoken to when strictly necessary, rarely received a "please" or "thank you" and on one memorable occasion was nearly reduced to tears by the master of the house.

My investigations into the role of private home carers are particularly relevant in the light of the recent death just before Christmas of a 66-year-old wheelchair-bound London woman. The carer who was providing live-in help for the victim, through Care Alternatives, a Wimbledon agency, has been charged with murder. Lucianne Sawyer, the director, says that people should not be alarmed. "We cannot totally eliminate risk but, after all, we have looked after 9,000 clients without incident."

She started the agency ten years ago and follows the UK HomeCare Association code of recruiting practice. "Because we have already got a strict recruitment policy, it's very difficult to do a lot more," she says. "We would like to be able to get police checks on our care assistants but at present this is only available for the people employing carers who look after children."

Her business had not been adversely affected, Ms Sawyer says. "Our recruitment policy and procedure is extremely thorough and we have an excellent reputation." However, following the incident the agency last week



With due care and attention: Lucianne Sawyer, whose agency provides live-in help for the elderly, is introducing more stringent checks on "carers"

decided to instigate two new procedures. Whenever geographically possible it will be visiting care attendants during the first week of live-in jobs. (The agency always telephones its live-in care attendants within the first day or two as a matter of course.)

In addition, Ms Sawyer says she will personally undertake spot checks on references of existing care attendants.

Care Alternatives, in common with the other reputable firms among the 400 to 500 private agencies in the country, always asks for two written references — if possible one from an employer — and also likes to talk to the referees on the telephone. But some of those attracted to the work do not have former employers. "A lot of

our staff come from Australia and New Zealand and we always fax their countries to take up references overseas," Ms Sawyer says.

All home care agencies have to be licensed by the employment department, which Ms Sawyer says does "a certain amount of checking" on premises and how agencies operate. They sometimes, she says, look at references and visit about once a year.

To find out what the job entails, I selected agencies from among the dozens of advertisements in *The Lady* with attractive names such as Aunt Jessica Care, Help At Hand, Newbury Nannies, Rocking Horse and so on.

I explained in my letter that I had no previous experience of taking care of the elderly, apart

Life below stairs in the 1990s is still startlingly anachronistic. I could almost have been in *Upstairs, Downstairs*. After my first day in service I was tempted to walk out

from now and then looking after elderly relatives and neighbours, but that I had brought up my own family. I didn't expect such prompt replies.

One or two telephoned almost immediately. I had to fill in application forms and supply two references from people who had

known me a long time. They were required to write back. I don't know whether they were telephoned. One agency wanted a photograph, several specified non-smokers and drivers were welcomed. I chose three agencies and went along for interviews and was offered work by two of them. Only

one asked me to attend a day induction course.

I joined half a dozen other women of varying ages to learn something about coping with the demands of the elderly. One question asked was what we would do if arriving one morning for day duty, having said goodbye to the night staff, we found the elderly client had passed away in bed.

The group looked nervously around at each other for inspiration. Some said they would telephone the GP, others that they would ring the next of kin. None of us suggested calling the police or dialling 999 for an ambulance. I was surprised that the need for first aid training was not mentioned by our tutor. (The British Nurses' Association, which also

supplies carers, as well as nurses, insists that its care attendants take their first aid two-day course. Carers have to foot the bill themselves.)

Our tutor warned us not to take our charges out in our own cars for insurance reasons, always to give a receipt if we took money for shopping ("elderly people can get incredibly forgetful and confused over money"). We were advised to take out indemnity insurance in respect of claims for breach of professional duty.

On my first assignment, a "live-in", the duties were hardly arduous (pay £30 a day). I prepared breakfast, lunch and supper and did a little housework. Each week the couple had exactly the same undemanding menu. There was what was described as a "heavy shopping lady", a reference to the provisions she bought, not her size. I was scheduled to do "light housework and make the beds". I was not entirely sad to leave.

Excluding the vast numbers of paid carers employed through local authorities and privately, there are six million people in Britain today looking after a relative at home. By the year 2000 predictions are that there will be more people caring for an elderly relative than a young child.

Crossroads Care provides temporary care relief for those looking after relatives in their homes. It is the largest agency of its kind, employing 2,000 attendants to help 18,000 families every year. Ian Cross, the director, stresses the importance attached to training and good management.

Not all of my experiences as a paid carer were depressing. A delightful Irish woman in her seventies who was allowed to leave hospital after a fall providing she had 24 hour care, was my first night duty. She wasn't able to go to the bathroom alone and every hour or so I was aroused from a near-comatose state (no sleeping is allowed) to help her to the commode. She was sweetest itself, always apologised for disturbing me and we drank cups of tea all night long.

My third role was to provide weekend meals for a frail little old lady living alone in the country. She had suffered a stroke and was wobbly on her legs. She loved gardening and I watered her plants. Again, she was a delight, totally appreciative.

But I must admit that if I don't come across another Zimmer frame, stair lift, commode or deaf aid it will not be much of a punishment.

Squatters should not be turned into criminals, a new group says

Lou Crisfield is petite and persuasive. She is a 25-year-old former squatter and a spokeswoman for Squatters' Action for Secure Homes, a body set up last December, to fight government proposals announced at the end of 1991, which would almost certainly criminalise squatting.

Squash, as it is known, faces the difficult task of promoting squatters' rights amid headlines such as "Filthy squatters smash home to bits" and "The day squatters invaded our home". Squash shares its offices, in north London, with the 14-year-old Advisory Service for Squatters. It also liaises with Shelter and New Horizon, the housing pressure groups, and with bodies such as the National Union of Students.

Ms Crisfield, a carpenter who works for Squash part-time, says the group's immediate aim is to reply to the government's consultation paper on changes to the law which would almost certainly make squatting a criminal offence.

Squash's long-term ambition, however, is to change the image of squatters as won't-pay scroungers who prefer to live for nothing than to pay their way. This stereotype belies the reality of the squatters' plight as homeless people with no choice, Ms Crisfield says.

Lorraine Wood, 22 years old and unemployed, has been a squatter since she was 18 and left her home in east London because of what she describes as "a difference of opinion" with her family. At the moment, she is squatting in a former old people's home in Islington, north London, with about 20 other people. She has been there for three months.

"I can't afford the deposit needed up front to rent a home," she says. What money she saves, she is squirrelling away to pay for a course on teaching English as a foreign language.

The chance of getting a council flat is remote for her as a single young person, who is therefore not classified as a priority category by the council. "To get on a council list, you have to have a permanent address," she says. "My sister, who has a child, and therefore has a better chance than me, has been on the waiting list for four years."

Wherever I lay my hat



Can't pay, would pay: Lou Crisfield working for squatters.

Most of her fellow squatters are single or students. Ms Wood says. But the squat will not survive for much longer. Islington council last week set a court date to reclaim possession of the building. Ms Wood and others like her are waiting for the bailiffs when they will leave peacefully, in search of a new squat.

Under the Criminal Law Act 1977, squatting is a criminal offence if it involves violence to gain entry, if a criminal act is committed to gain entry, or while inside; or if there is an act forbidding trespass, on, for example, Ministry of Defence property. Otherwise, squatting is dealt with under civil law.

Squatting in vacant properties is a civil offence. Bringing a council court action to evict squatters is often slow and can cost householders up to £800.

Launching his consultation paper last October, Kenneth Baker, the home secretary,

said that existing legal remedies against squatting were "patently unsatisfactory". The paper suggests four options, from maintaining the status quo to making squatting a criminal offence.

But the most likely outcome of the consultation paper, Mr Baker made clear, is that the police would have unrestricted powers to enter residential or commercial property and arrest squatters, who would face six months in jail and a fine of up to £5,000.

Squash is fighting such changes. "We feel the law deals effectively with squatting at the moment," Ms Crisfield says.

"The government's alleged 'victims of squatting' are largely mythical. Private individuals are not deprived of their homes by squatters."

Government figures show that only three people were convicted under section 7 of the 1977 act in 1988 and only one in 1989.

But what of the approximately 10,000 civil law cases

a year brought against squatters? Such cases hardly ever involve home-owners, says Squash. Court lists reveal that private home owners are very rarely involved. "It's true that very rarely are homeowners squatted," says Mr Geoffrey Cutting, the chairman of the Small Landlords Association. "But there are dozens of cases of people whose vacant home is up for sale, and cases where someone has gone to hospital or who has died who are squatted. At the moment, the owner is put to great expense and time by having to go through these complicated procedures in the courts."

Most cases result from the 90 per cent of squatting which happens in unused public-sector housing and the 9 per cent of squatting involving commercial property. In these cases, the council, housing association, or commercial owner takes the squatter to court in order to evict them. Make squatting a criminal offence, and you will deny many squatters a chance to make their case to councils to be housed, Squash says.

Squatting families are routinely told by local authorities that they are "not homeless" and their housing applications are turned down.

Every squatter is, in fact, statutorily homeless under the Housing Act of 1985.

According to Squash, about one third of squatters are families with children. They say that a London housing survey in 1986, which showed that cases involving young children were negligible, is out of date.

Many squatters have been rehoused by councils after being taken to the civil courts. Cases can be adjourned for squatters to bring proceedings against the council for breach of statutory duty.

Few cases go beyond the first stage of judicial review, at which point the council usually assumes its obligations. Whether criminalisation will close off this process to squatters is a disputed point. In the longer term, Squash will attempt to promote the message that, as Ms Crisfield says: "For up to 50,000 people, squatting is not a problem; it's the solution, albeit temporary, to their homelessness."

RACHEL KELLY

New York, New York

WHERE in the world would you like to go on holiday? Europe, Asia, Fiji, Australia, Brazil, America? And would you like to take a partner along — free? The *Times* is offering a choice of first-class hotels throughout the world where you can stay with a friend, whose flights and hotel accommodation are free.

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"ONE belongs to New York instantly. One belongs to it as much in five minutes as in five years," wrote Thomas Wolfe. On that reckoning five days — or more if the diary and the budget allow — is ample time to conduct a serious affair with the greatest city in the world.

For New York, of course, read Manhattan. You've seen it in the movies but the first glimpse — preferably from over the river while driving in from JFK airport in one of those ridiculous stretch limos — will never cease to astonish. It is not that the lights are brighter or the skyscrapers higher than imagined. The sharp intake of breath is due simply to the sheer vitality, the "animal buoyancy" as *Anna Karenina* called it, which New York exudes.

Begin the first morning like a true tourist at the Empire State building, only a few blocks walk from our two featured hotels. There is a sound reason: the view is like an aerial photograph of the city, offering the perfect way to fix bearings, identify the main points of interest and plot routes between them. On a clear day — and few can resist humming Alan Jay



Empire State building: on a clear day you can see forever

Lerner's words when at the top — it is said you can see for 85 miles, which must be about as close to forever as the human eye can get.

Next, take the Circle Line boat for a three-hour trip around Manhattan Island, or, alternatively, the ferry to Staten Island for fine, close-up views of the Statue of Liberty and downtown Man-

hattan. At 50 cents for the return trip, the latter is the best bargain in the city.

Having acquired a grasp of the geography, explore. The famous yellow cabs are ubiquitous and the subway perfectly safe, at least during the day. But good walking shoes are a far better way to see the sights — and the grid system makes it that metropolitan

wonder, a city in which it is impossible to get lost.

Start exploring at the Rockefeller Center, again close by our chosen hotels. Comprising 19 buildings on a 22-acre site, it is nothing less than a city in miniature, with skyscraper offices, restaurants, cinemas and shops. In the middle of it all is an ice rink, where in winter New Yorkers glide and twirl day and night to the strains of Sinatra under a huge golden statue of Prometheus. No where perhaps better epitomises the "work hard, play hard" ethos that is New York.

A walk through Central Park, New York's green lung, is a must for a Saturday or Sunday morning, perhaps on the way to the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, the largest collection of works of art and antiquities in the western world.

For a contrast try the Frick Collection, a short walk down Fifth Avenue. The elegant mansion was lived in until the 1930s and the stunning pictures (Titian, Goya, Velazquez) are presented in a setting that retains the intimate feel of a private home.

Despite its cosmopolitan nature New York is a collection of villages, its character changing rapidly in the space of a few short blocks. Sample the bohemianism of Greenwich Village (but do not expect to find the new Bob Dylan or Joan Baez singing in the corner coffee shop), experience the freneticism of Wall Street and the financial district, browse in the classy antique shops of the upper east side and strut past the neon lights of Broadway. Take in the restaurants, the bars, the shops, all among the best the world can offer. Do not worry if you have never liked the New Yorkers you have met in London. On their own patch they are different again — a people, as Thomas Wolfe suggested, with a sense of their own belonging.

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Blood, toil, tears and Scotch

Matthew d'Ancona reports on a riddle wrapped in a medical mystery — how did Winston Churchill manage to save the world while drinking like a fish?

Lords are lordliest in their wine, according to Milton, but are statesmen more statesmanlike when they've sunk a few? Viewers of the BBC's television biography of Sir Winston Churchill may well have pondered this question last week, as they learnt that the man who won a war and made the cigar a totem of power was also a serious drinker, capable of downing quantities of alcohol that would incapacitate some people.

Never averse to a glass of hock over breakfast, in his late sixties the prime minister would drink a bottle of champagne at lunch, followed by a few brandies. After his rest, he would move on to Scotch and soda, and consume yet more champagne and cognac at dinner, returning to a steady drip of diluted whisky as he worked into the small hours. But Churchill's aides rarely saw him the worse for wear.

The roll-call of politicians with a taste for the hard stuff is long and glowering. Pitt the Younger, for example, was a fierce and often gout-ridden drinker, of whom one observer said that he "liked a glass of wine very well, and a bottle still better". Lord Asquith's love of brandy was such that he occasionally appeared unsteady in the Commons, while Ernest Bevin's secretaries complained that he used alcohol like a car uses petrol.

Among today's leaders, Boris Yeltsin is reputedly the most bibulous, often criticised for the Falstaffian lifestyle which distinguishes him so markedly from the abstemious Mikhail Gorbachev.

But Churchill's sheer stature makes his drinking history more compelling and — for those campaigning to strip alcohol of its glamour — unsettling. Over the past decade, the Royal Colleges have recommended a safe weekly intake for men of no more than 21 units of alcohol, a total which Churchill must have exceeded every day. Assuming that Churchill drank two bottles of champagne and about ten shots of spirits a day his daily intake would have been 22 units.

"I'm astonished he could get away with it," says John Rae, the director of the Portman Group, which combats alcohol misuse. "He was brought up at a time when people drank a lot more than nowadays. I would worry if people took this to mean that you can drink a great deal and operate at work. They should in no circumstances treat him as a role model."

The image of the lion-hearted national hero as a seasoned toper certainly upsets current orthodoxies on the destructive impact of alcohol in the workplace. A survey conducted last year by the charity Alcohol Concern showed that drinkers take four times as many

days off work as non-drinkers and that three-quarters of employers believe that alcohol misuse is a problem in their organisations.

Booze is hostile to honest graft. Yet Churchill's close acquaintance with the bottle does not appear to have impaired his judgment, his energies as a leader or his output as a historian. He lived to the age of 90, before succumbing to a stroke in January 1965.

How did he manage it? Experts on alcohol and its use say that tolerance can be nurtured in many different ways, depending on the drinker and his or her physical idiosyncrasies. The ratio of fluid to solid in an individual's body, for example, naturally affects the concentration of alcohol in the bloodstream and, therefore, susceptibility to drunkenness.

A stable routine can also play its part: the housewife knocking back the Tio Pepe at home every evening is arguably better placed to hold her drink than the travelling salesman drinking in different places and circumstances every day.

But the much-travelled Churchill never enjoyed a routine lifestyle, so it is unlikely that this was an important factor for him.

The drinker's choice of poison is important too, as certain drinks are better resisted by the body than others. The stomach treats alcohol as an irritant and produces mucus in response, slowing the process of



Still working at full capacity at the age of 89: Sir Winston Churchill in 1963, during a well-watered luncheon meeting with Paul Vardinoyannis, the Greek politician

absorption: sherry makes people get drunk more quickly than whisky, because it generates less protective mucus.

As it happens, Churchill's favourite tipple — Scotch and soda and champagne — were fizzy, and therefore absorbed quickly into the bloodstream. But he doubtless compensated for this by pacing himself. Sir David Hunt, one of his private secretaries, recalled that the prime minister "drank the weakest whisky-and-sodas I have ever known". Another, Sir John Colville, observed that "Winston's whisky was very much a whisky and soda. It was really a mouthwash."

Another important variable is the rate at which the body metabolises alcohol, turning it

into carbon dioxide and water. On average, a unit of alcohol an hour is processed but, according to Adrian Carr of the Alcohol Studies Centre, Paisley College, this figure can vary dramatically. "Most of the material is based on an average person who is 5ft 10in, 11 stone and perfectly proportioned. They don't talk about the fat slob and the skinny people."

Long years of drinking experience, he says, usually lurk behind an apparently heroic tolerance. "The main reason why Churchill wasn't rolling out to meet generals was probably long-term consumption. There's evidence to suggest that if you drink a lot for a long time it takes more to get you

drunk. Keeping yourself topped up means that the effect may be negligible."

Why men like Churchill take to drink is perhaps more puzzling a question than how they learn to take a skinful. If the apparently bullish prime minister approached alcohol as a means of warding off the "black dog" of depression which hounded him all his life, he did so in error. In spite of its ability to uplift in the short term, alcohol compounds emotional difficulties: studies show that in any population of problem drinkers there is likely to be a significant level of clinical depression, which often recedes when a subject goes on the wagon.

More probable is that Churchill's extraordinary intake of al-

cohol reflected his taste for excess, a tendency which the psychiatrist Anthony Storr characterises as his "need for the manic realm". According to legend, the great have great appetites and a tendency to addiction.

Churchill loved food, drink and fine cigars. The young Winston was beaten for stealing sugar, and an early school report described him as "greedy". Later in life, he fell prey to the pleasures of the wine cellar; his gargantuan appetites matched his gargantuan role in history.

Drink is also supposed to inspire man as it destroys him, providing what Dr Johnson called a "pick-lock" to the deepest recesses of the imagination. Perhaps, like writers from Horace to Fitzgerald, Churchill saw in the dark glass of the bottle the muse which would keep his creative instincts aflame.

"There's probably a correlation between excellence and drinking," says Simon Rae, the editor of the *Faber Book of Drink and Drinking*. "Drink can be the corset of a very fragile personality. But some people drink and some don't."

Hilder, he says, was a teetotaler, while Alexander the Great was a sozzler.

But medicine and psychiatry cannot hope to plumb the depths of Churchill's relationship with drink, a relationship in which he always claimed to exercise the upper hand. "All I will say is that I have taken more out of alcohol than alcohol has taken out of me," he once claimed.

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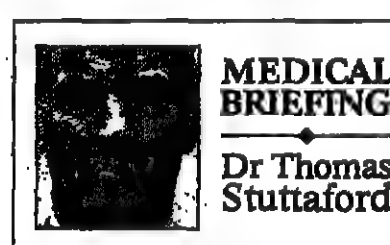
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Happily hooked on HRT

"IF MOST of the drugs issued by psychiatrists for the treatment of depression in women were dropped into the ocean, women would be healthier, and fish sicker," writes Mr John Studd, an expert on hormone replacement therapy (HRT), in *General Practitioner* magazine. But, in *The Lancet*, psychiatrists claim that HRT can become addictive and suggest that some patients come back to doctors more frequently for larger and larger doses.

The public, which has to take the treatment, is confused by the argument, but, as in most savage disagreements, both sides are right.

Any doctor treating a depressed middle-aged woman would be unwise not to consider that hormonal changes might be responsible, and if other signs, symptoms and blood tests confirm an approaching menopause, would be foolish not to, try HRT. It would also be



MEDICAL BRIEFING
Dr Thomas Stuttford

absurdly optimistic not to appreciate that women, like men, suffer from endogenous depressions and that the biochemical upset could be as easily related to the brain as to the ovaries.

Many women will recover their old mood with nothing other than hormone replacement, and with it their sense of well-being. Recent research in Copenhagen has shown that middle-aged spread may regress (albeit so minimally that

HRT could never double as a slimming pill) they will look younger, their bones will be stronger and their sex life rejuvenated. It is hardly surprising that women are reluctant to return to the depressed state which prevailed before they took the hormones.

Other women whose depression is not hormone-linked will need to take the very antidepressant which Mr Studd would consign to the deep. A report in the *Journal of Psychiatry* by Dr Stewart Montgomery of St Mary's Hospital, London, stresses the need for antidepressant treatment of this sort to be continued for at least six months, as if treatment is stopped too soon, there is a 50 per cent chance of relapse or recurrence. The advent of the newer and safer antidepressants of the 5HT reuptake inhibitors group has made this a less daunting task for the patient, and a less worrying one for the doctor.

Death from peanuts

PEOPLE have heard of aflatoxin poisoning from mouldy peanuts which is a problem in the third world. They may even be aware that Cerumenol, the drops used to loosen earwax before syringing, is made of peanut oil and should not be used if the ear is at all eczematous. But the most devastating effect of peanuts, their ability to cause catastrophic anaphylaxis, collapse from an acute allergic reaction in a previously sensitised patient, is little appreciated.

The danger of peanuts can be quite as severe as that found in those who suffer from allergy to penicillin, bee-stings, shellfish, foreign protein found in some injections, and some other drugs — such as iron injections, anti-inflammatory agents (including aspirin, in one recent case the patient had taken a combination of aspirin and peanuts), heparin (an anticoagulant) and neuromuscular blocking agents (used to achieve relaxation in anaesthesia). This was tragically illustrated by the death of the Marlborough girl 30 minutes after she had eaten a pastry containing traces of peanuts.

Anaphylactic collapse is caused by a combination of swelling of the tissues around the throat, so that the airways are obstructed, by bronchospasm — the acute wheeze as the bronchial tubes go into

spasm — and by a catastrophic fall in blood pressure resulting from dilation of the main blood vessels.

The patient's symptoms come on suddenly, usually within 15 minutes of exposure to the allergen. Usually the patient will be aware of their sensitivity to the substance, but will not understand how dramatic the reaction can be. They become restless, flushed, the heart races, they feel faint, find difficulty in breathing and wheeze, sneeze and cough. They may vomit. The face swells, often accompanied by an urticarial rash (like nettle rash). If the circulation fails, death results from heart failure.

Adrenalin, given intramus-

cularly at once, is the only reliable treatment. The patient must be laid flat, with the feet raised, and immediately given an injection of between 0.5ml and 1ml of adrenalin at a strength of one in a thousand. The dose is repeated at ten-minute intervals until the patient recovers. Thereafter, intravenous antihistamines or steroids can be useful, but their action is far too slow — measured in hours rather than minutes — to treat acute collapse.

Patients who have previously had a severe reaction to any allergen can, like President Bush, who is sensitive to bee stings, always carry an injection of adrenalin already prepared and drawn up into a syringe.

Brain food



MOTHERS who are unable to breastfeed their babies have been worried by the report in *The Lancet* which showed that very premature babies who were fed on mother's milk tended to do slightly better academically in childhood than those who had had to rely on cow's milk.

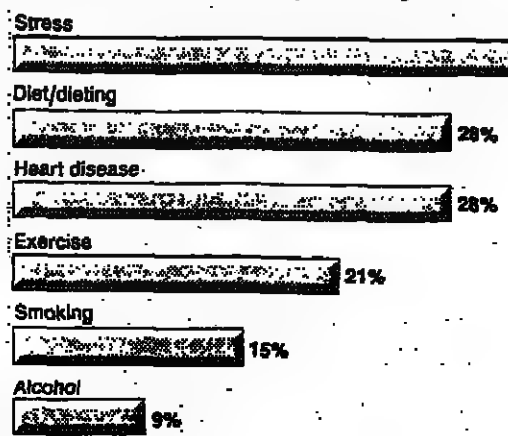
Some of the deficiency in cow's milk may be explained by an absence of complex fats including docosahexanoic acid and arachidonic acid which are necessary for the development of brain cells. It seems that manufacturers may soon be adding these fats to baby milks.

Mothers should remember that the survey involved tiny premature infants, rather than those born as they usually are, healthy at full-term. Women who have relied upon the bottle to feed their children should not think that they have condemned them to wear a dunce's cap forever.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

INFORMATION ON HEALTH

On which of the following would you like more information about how they can affect your health?



Base: 2,404 users of 50%. Source: MOR

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Errors in ITC paper insufficient to justify quashing decision

Regina v Independent Television Commission, Ex parte Television South West

Before Lord Donaldson of Lynton, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Nolan and Lord Justice Steyn.

[Judgment February 5]

Television South West were not justified in their complaint that the Independent Television Commission had acted unfairly in breach of a legitimate expectation that it would not apply more stringent criteria to their revenue assumptions than those mentioned in its invitation to apply for regional Channel 3 licences.

Errors in a staff assessment

paper considered by members of ITC in deciding to reject TSW's application did not critically affect them so as to require the court to set aside its decision on the ground of misdirection.

The Court of Appeal so stated, the Master of the Rolls dissenting, in dismissing TSW's application for judicial review of ITC's decision to reject their bid on the ground that it was not satisfied that TSW could maintain the proposed service throughout the licence period.

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Mr Gordon Pollock, QC and Mr Geoffrey Vos for TSW, Mr Patrick Elias, QC and Mr David Pannick for ITC, Mr Thomas Morrison, QC and Mr William J. Wood for West Country.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS

The Master of the Rolls said that under the Broadcasting Act 1990 one of the duties of the ITC was that of securing the provision of a nationwide system of television broadcasting services (Channel 3) to be structured on a regional basis.

Under the licensing procedure each licence was for a 10-year period and applicants for licences were to make sealed bids of an index-linked annual sum payable to ITC on behalf of the public.

Before a licence might be awarded,

the ITC had to be satisfied that the conditions of section 16 were met as to quality of service and, by section 16(1)(b), that the applicant would be able to maintain that service throughout the period of the licence.

By section 17 the licence for any particular region was to be awarded to the applicant who, having passed the section 16 tests, submitted the highest bid.

TSW failed the sustainability

condition, so that although the highest bidder, the licence was not awarded to them but to West Country which succeeded on both quality and sustainability conditions.

Licensing procedure

In November 1990 a consultative draft of an invitation to apply for licences was published. No announcement was made as to ITC's estimate of the growth rate of total television advertising revenue (NAR) over the licence period 1993-2002. The only

Information available was

an article in ITC's journal *AdViews* in which the personal conclusion of the writers was that an average figure of 4 per cent would be appropriate and consistent with the view of other forecasters. In particular with that of the National Economic Research Associates (NERA) at 4.6 per cent.

ITC adopted a 4 per cent figure although recognising that it was on the low side. That was not known to the applicants.

In February 1991 ITC published

the invitation to apply for licences. By the closing date of May 15, 40 applications had been received, which were an important and significant figure since the ITC intended to announce the allocation of licences in October and the process of detailed evaluation of so many applications within so short a time created obvious problems. Their methodology had not been criticised.

It seemed that an ITC staff

team of two, allocated to consider the financial regional applications, prepared a paper which was discussed first with a senior economist on the staff and later with the member allocated to take a special interest in the region.

The paper underwent amendments in the course of those discussions but eventually emerged as paper No 179(91) which was undoubtedly considered at the meetings on October 10 and 11 when the allocation decisions were taken.

TSW's primary complaint

was that the terms of the ITC's invitation led it to believe that (a) if the assumptions underlying its forecasts had been thoroughly considered, were consistent and credible, (b) the projections including the sensitivity tests put forward by it in response to the specific requirements of the invitation were properly prepared on the basis of the assumptions stated and (c) the accounting policies had been properly and consistently applied throughout the period, the business plan would be held to meet the sustainability requirements imposed by section 16(1)(b) of the Act and that no other more stringent or unannounced criteria would be applied by ITC.

In reliance on that belief,

TSW had prepared their business plan which met the criteria in full and calculated the amount of the bid at a figure which would render the licence profitable. Had they known or suspected that more stringent criteria would be applied, the bid would have been reduced.

TSW's secondary complaint was that paper No 179(91) was flawed on account of its failure to assess TSW's bid fairly or accurately.

In the course of his reply,

Mr Pollock, while not formally abandoning that complaint which had been exhaustively examined during the argument, seemed no longer to attach importance to it.

NERA had also written to ITC that in its view ITC could have assisted applicants by explaining in more detail how it intended to evaluate the financial proposals presented. NERA recommended that the evaluation should con-

centrate on the methodology used

as well as on the forecasts.

TSW's application for a licence was based on their own experience as to the economic model produced by NERA and advice from the equally respectable Henley Centre for Forecasting.

Its features were (a) their forecast of an average of 3.3 per cent (NAR) over the licence period, (b) a substantial reduction in costs as compared with TSW's costs in the years before the application was made and (c) an indication that in principle they had secured loan facilities from Barclays Bank to the extent of £10 million designed to overcome potential cash flow difficulties in the earlier years of the licence.

It was clear that their forecasts

were credible, that nothing worse befell them than was contemplated by the sensitivity tests, that the networking arrangements were as indicated in the invitation and that the forecasts were, in fact, well founded. TSW's very large bid would still not have prevented them making a respectable profit over the licence period as a whole.

There were four sources from which it was possible to assess the sustainability condition. In many ways the most important were the contemporaneous staff assessment, paper No 179(91) and 20(1) read with the members' agreement to record in the minutes any reasons other than those summarised in the papers.

The latter staff assessment

paper focused on a comparison among five applications in respect of which an issue arose as to sustainability. In the case of TSW it suggested that revenue projections were optimistic, that the cash bid, in absolute terms and as a percentage of revenue was one of the highest and that TSW was proposing to bid a sum annually which very closely approached its 1992 balance sheet value.

His Lordship considered

that the ITC was not mechanically applying a different cost sensitivity test such as a 4 per cent NAR growth rate. It was considering how close to the margin of credibility and prudence the applicants' forecasts were going to be. The role of the court was to consider whether the licensing procedure was fairly conducted, and whether ITC correctly directed itself as to the law and as to the facts.

If it erred, the court then had to exercise a judicial discretion as to whether to grant relief and if so what relief: see *R v Monopolies and Mergers Commission, Ex parte Agip Group plc* (1986) 1 WLR 763, 774-775, 778-779, 782-783.

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TSW had prepared their business plan which met the criteria in full and calculated the amount of the bid at a figure which would render the licence profitable. Had they known or suspected that more stringent criteria would be applied, the bid would have been reduced.

TSW's secondary complaint was that paper No 179(91) was flawed on account of its failure to assess TSW's bid fairly or accurately.

In the course of his reply, Mr Pollock, while not formally abandoning that complaint which had been exhaustively examined during the argument, seemed no longer to attach importance to it.

NERA had also written to ITC that in its view ITC could have assisted applicants by explaining in more detail how it intended to evaluate the financial proposals presented. NERA recommended that the evaluation should con-

Council can evict trespasser without housing enquiry

Regina v Barnet London Borough Council, Ex parte Grumbridge

Before Mr Justice Otton

[Judgment January 30]

There was no requirement or statutory obligation on a local authority to determine whether an admitted trespasser was homeless or in priority housing need before deciding whether to seek an order for possession of its own property from him.

Mr Justice Otton so held in the Queen's Bench Division rejecting an application by Ronald Frederick Grumbridge for judicial review of the respondent council's decision to seek a possession order on the council flat where he lived.

Mr David Watkinson for the applicant, Mr Joseph Harper for the respondent.

MR JUSTICE OTTON said that until March 1988 Mr Grumbridge had occupied the flat as a licensee of the tenant. The tenant had subsequently moved out and the council had served notice to quit.

The applicant had consulted solicitors who wrote to the council pointing out that he was homeless and in priority need and inviting the council to undertake enquiries under section 58 of the Housing Act 1985.

Mr Watkinson had relied on

The instant case was wholly

different. The applicant had become a trespasser when the tenant left. There was no obligation on the local authority to determine whether the applicant had a priority need to be rehoused before deciding whether to institute proceedings for possession. Nor could it be said that the decision was unreasonable.

Solicitors: Houghmans, Mr G. R. L. Creer, Hendon.

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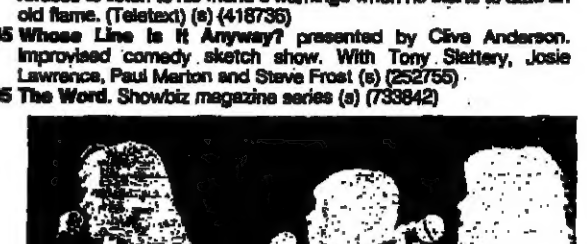
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CHANNEL 4

5.00 **Channel 4 Daily** (9487339) 9.25 **Schools** (94844281)
12.00 **The Parliament programme** presented by Sir **Baxter**.
Interview Sir Robin Day interviewing the foreign secretary Douglas
Hurd (51129) :
12.30 **Business Daily**. The latest news from the world's business
centres (95007)
1.00 **Seaside Street**. Pre-school learning series from the United States.
The guest is **John** actor **Robin Williams** (93029)
2.00 **Films: Santa Fe Trail** (1940, b/w) starring **Errol Flynn**, **Raymond**
Massey, **Olivia de Havilland** and **Ronald Reagan**. Western high on
vigour and low on historical accuracy with **Reagan** as **Custer** and
Massey as the anti-slavery campaigner **John Brown**, with
the **de Havilland** and **Reagan** as **John Brown's** fiancée and his
professionalism by **Michael Curtis** (8442)
4.00 **Travelogue**. A repeat of Wednesday's programme in which **Lady**
Vale **Sofie** and **Mrs Adina Pavlovici** explore the cultural delights of
the city of **Bolzano**, **Falckland**, **Toronto** (448)
4.30 **Countdown**. Another round of the words and numbers game,
hosted by **Richard Whitley** (a) (848)
5.00 **The Falklands War**. A repeat showing of Monday's final
programme in the series, examining the facts behind the
Argentine invasion of the **Falklands**, **Toronto** (8533)
6.00 **Happy Days**. Nostalgic comedy about high school days in 1950s
Milwaukee. Starring **Henry Winkler** and **Ron Howard** (842)
7.00 **Tonight with Jonathan Ross**. The guests are Caribbean cook
Ruth King and **Johnny Rotten**. **Rotten** in the guest as head of
the **British** **Womans** **Olympic** team
with the **Canadian** **band** **Cory** and the **Justice Pigs** and, with their latest
single "The Statue Got Me High", they Might Be Giants (a) (194)
7.00 **Channel 4 News** with **Jon Snow** and **Zelma Radwaj**. (Teletext)
8.00 **Westend** (95007)
7.15 **First Restriction** (95074)
8.00 **Brookside**. Soap set in a Merseyside close. (Teletext) (a) (8910)
8.00 **Out2look**. The newspaper sports quiz continues with the
sports desk of the **Mail on Sunday** against their counterparts from
the **Sunday Express** (a) (845)
8.00 **Cheers**. Award-winning American comedy series set in a Boston
bar (4886)
8.30 **How Does Your Garden Grow?** Exceptional series in which **Philip**
Wood and **David Wilson** explore the unusual private gardens of
Ireland. Today they are in the **Dublin**, **Co Dublin**, garden of **Brian**
Woods which is heavily influenced by oriental design and content
(8741)
9.00 **Drawn On**. Sometimes very funny adult comedy series starring
Brian Benbow as a publisher in his late 30s trying to adjust to single
status after his 12-year-old marriage ends in divorce. This week he
meets **Brian** (848)



Super troupers: the pop group Abba down under (12.05am)

2.05am Film: Abba: the Movie (1977). A documentary record of the Swedish pop group's Australian tour. Directed by Lasse Hallstrom (252224)

1.50 Tonight with Jonathan Ross. See 6.30 (r) (a) (8122563). Ends at

22827 6.00 C/A
22810 7.00 %

LA
New German League Football (2215) 10.00
New German League Football (2215) 10.00
Top Soccer Weekend (2205) 11.00
Live (22625) 12.00 Aston Villa Soccer (73576)
12.00 German League Football (49175)

EUROSPORT
Live the Astra satellite.
10.00m Road to the Olympics (26549) 9.50
Olympics (26574) 9.50 Tennis (26549) 11.30
Road to the World Cup (26523) 12.00 Motorsport
Magazine (22738) 12.30pm European
Live (27057) 1.00 Basketball (49113) 2.30
Road to the Olympics (1029) 3.00 Davis Cup
Tennis (93739) 4.00 Live Sports: Shing
Wong (22571) 4.00 Live-Bowling (1897) 5.00 Tennis
Magazine (22751) 5.00 European News (5370) 8.00
Live (71755) 9.50 Athletics (49523) 10.00
Tennis (26549) 11.00 The Road to the Olympics
Live (27057) 1.00 Tennis (2728)

SCREENSPORT
Live the Astra satellite.
10.00m American Movie (17945) 7.30
International Ice Hockey Preview (26260) 9.50
12.00 Winter Olympic Preview (26260) 9.50

USA
Olympics (28387) 1.00pm Movie Show
Sports (28387) 1.00pm Movie Show
Pre-Olympic Ice Hockey (49129) 4.00 US
Men's Pro Sto (2652) 4.30 Pinta (4736)
5.00 Ford Flat Report (2226) 6.00 NBA Action
1992 (6123) 9.30 Gold (49194) 7.30 Pre-
Olympic Ice Hockey (21522) 9.00 Gilette
World Sports Special (77529) 9.30 NBA
Sports (47543) 11.30 Bowling (50738)

LIFESTYLE
Live the Astra satellite.
10.00m The Great American (192108)
4735949 10.50 Coffee Break (1261804)
11.25 Great Gales in New Orleans
2003/04 12.00 Ruby Jeaney Reveal
(267194) 12.50pm Show of Time (491578)
12.45 Special for Tomorrow (494145) 1.20
12.50pm Show of Time (491578)
(2471571) 2.30 Power Rate USA (266126)
3.00m Set-Vision (265454) 3.30m Ten
Billion (4904) 4.00 Dick Van Dyke Show (2656)
4.30m Set-Vision (265454) 4.30m
(2204119) 6.25 The Tony Randall Show
(2656574) 6.25 Set-Vision (265252)

30 3.30

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